



The Bends 20 years on

How it changed everything

"KANYE WEST?
I'D HAVE
KNOCKED
HIM OUT"

NOEL

TAKES ON YEEZY,
SAM SMITH AND
COURTNEY LOVE

And Liam's beard

+

Arcade Fire

The weird world of Will Butler

Mumford & Sons

"No more banjos!"
Exclusive new album info

Super Furry Animals

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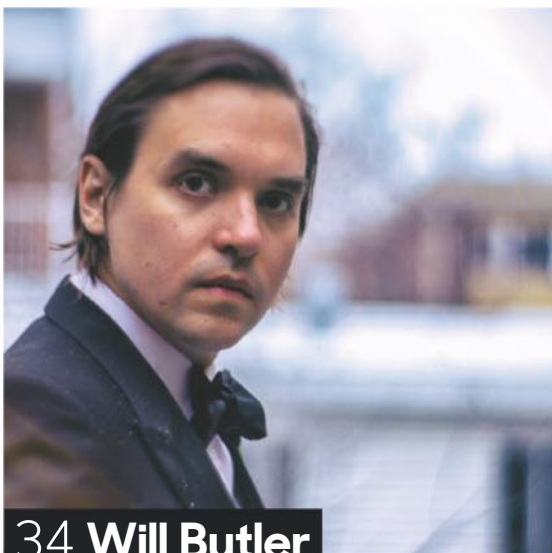
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GET YOUR COX OFF

The new Blur song 'Go Out' proves that 'Think Tank' wasn't really a Blur album, but an album under Blur's name. It was lacking something, and that something was the genius that is Graham Coxon. I think 'Go Out' is brilliant and it makes me really excited for the new album, 'The Magic Whip'. You can hear the same sound that's been carried on through most of their albums for almost 25 years: that crunchy, awkward guitar and steady rhythm that can only be achieved when the four of them are in the same room together. I also think a record without the negative influence of pressure and deadlines being forced upon the band could be really interesting. What are Blur capable of when they're in a relaxed frame of mind?

Laura Bradley, via email



Tom Howard: You're dead right, Laura – 'Go Out' reeks of Graham Coxon, and that chugging guitar sound of his is all over it. He recently told the *South China Morning Post* that "a lot of the stuff guitar-wise reflected my anxiety at the intense environment of Hong Kong", where they recorded the album, so it sounds like his headspace is perfect for

writing Blur songs. I dread to imagine what songs written by a Coxon at peace with the world would sound like. Even more excitingly, his influence makes 'The Magic Whip' the first proper Blur album since 1999's '13'. 'Think Tank' has 'Out Of Time' – one of the great Blur songs – but really, it's a Damon solo album in all but name. Which is great, but it's not Blur is it?

with. I don't blame her. I've seen interviews with Jake Bugg admitting to being bored rigid at the prospect of doing said interviews IN said interviews, so I can only imagine what it must be like for someone on the level of, say, Beyoncé, who must be completely deprived of privacy. Sia is right to say music is for listening to, not viewing, and has proved that you don't need to go overboard with the publicity to be successful.

Rona McCann, via email

TH: You're right, Rona – Sia's going about her business in an intriguing manner. Wearing a giant white wig to the Grammys in the name of anonymity guaranteed her more attention than if she'd just gone wearing jeans and a T-shirt. But hey, it's working out for her. She gets to be a famous songwriter for Beyoncé, Kanye and Eminem and still no-one knows what she looks like. I reckon she'll get bored of it one day, though, and project a high-definition image of her face onto the moon or something.

GOLD, FRANKINCENSE AND BLUR

Blur's new song, eh? It's an absolute monster. Sounds like 'Dan Abnormal' from 'The Great Escape' mixed with something from '13', with a hint of 'Parklife'-era vocals thrown in. It's an utterly perfect combination! And better than what most bands are doing at the minute. I hope the album sounds similar. Exciting times for Blur fans.

Kieran Hornsby, via email

I remember the first time I heard Blur. I was in a record shop in Chinatown in London in 1994 where these great tunes were playing. I asked the shopkeeper what it was, he showed me 'Parklife', I snapped it up and played it non-stop for months. How it never won the Mercury Prize I don't know. Anyway, I'm delighted Blur are back with

new material. About time! I'm hoping it's Britpoppy like 'Parklife' or dark like 'Think Tank'.

John Goldberg, via email

TH: It's been a while since we've had so many letters about one subject. But what can you say, there's a lot of love out there for Damon, Graham, Alex and Dave. Kieran – you could be on the right lines with '13' I reckon. John – 'Parklife' seems a bit of a stretch, and I imagine the darkness of 'Think Tank' will be taken over by the creative wizardry of Graham Coxon. But you never know. Stranger things have happened. For example: 'Mr Tembo'.



GOOD PALMA

Last weekend I saw Palma Violets on the NME Awards Tour at Tunbridge Wells Forum. It was extreme!

During the first few seconds of 'Rattlesnake Highway' the crowd went absolutely mental, and this carried on throughout the whole show. This got me thinking about why bands this big don't play local, independent, smaller venues more often. It's a shame, because the support they'd get would be phenomenal!

Jade Harmar, via email

I live in Shetland so the chances to go to gigs are few and far between. When I saw Palma Violets and Fat White Family on the same bill I knew I couldn't miss it. I saw them in Glasgow and it was absolutely amazing – I even got a photo with Chilli! I live on an island that feels like it's millions of miles away from the exciting world of Palma Violets, so to get a hug from Chilli left me speechless. Sadly I failed to convince

him to come play a gig in Shetland and give my band a support slot...

Joseph Morgan, via email

TH: Jade – oh, but they do! Palma Violets are playing small venues (like The Lincoln Imp in Scunthorpe, below left) as they try out new songs. Even Blur played Margate Winter Gardens and London's tiny 100 Club in 2012 when warming up for their Hyde Park show. And there will be more! But only occasionally. And that's how it should be, so it's more of a treat. Joseph – great to hear. Chilli's a top dude in a top band.

YOU CANNOT SIA

I felt a new wave of admiration for Sia after reading your piece about her approach to her drastic rise to fame. She's been a key vertebra in the backbone of the recent pop scene, and has found a way to continue contributing in a way she's comfortable



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

This is me meeting Jack Steadman from Bombay Bicycle Club at Manchester Apollo! Siobhán Lally, via email



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28 october – london – shepherd's bush empire

29 october – london – shepherd's bush empire **[sold-out!]**

NME TRACK OF THE WEEK

1. Kanye West
All Day

Trust Kanye to steal the show at the Brits. After announcing his performance at the last minute, Yeezy, rising Minnesota talent Allan Kingdom and New York rapper Theophilus London – backed by a crowd of grime MCs and a pair of flamethrowers – blazed through new track 'All Day'. No surprises here: it's epic. Over the top of a jolting synth, Kanye's flow is rapid and aggressive: "Y'all better watch what you say to me". Roll on the new album.

Lucy Jones, Deputy Editor, NME.COM

2. Will Butler
Waving Flag

Will Butler spent more than a decade in Arcade Fire before getting round to making his eight-track debut solo album, but last week he proved he's no slouch at songwriting, penning a track a day inspired by stories in *The Guardian*. The mournful, meditative 'Waving Flag' is based on articles about an anti-apartheid activist and Ukrainian separatists celebrating a Soviet holiday. Instant political pop.

Dan Stubbs, News Editor

3. Death Cab For Cutie
No Room In Frame

"Was I in your way when the cameras turned to face you?/No room in frame for two", trills Ben Gibbard, possibly suffering from a lingering case of Divorcing A Movie Star Syndrome after his split from Zoëy Deschanel in 2011. But this second single from Death Cab's 'Kintsugi' album is a further flashbulb on Gibbard's own inimitable talents, an elegant and inventive wash of collegiate indie rock that sounds like emo growing up, getting over it and living intricately ever after.

Mark Beaumont, writer

4. Only Real
Can't Get Happy

Niall Galvin is finally releasing his debut album 'Jerk At The End Of The Line' at the end of March, and this latest taster is his usual rubbery surf-indie – think a lackadaisical Jamie T. The title and lines like "I lay defeated" and "Do you think of me at all?" might sound sorry for themselves, but the melody's pure sunshine, warmly psychedelic and adorned with dubby drum clatter.

Matthew Horton, writer

5. Honeyblood
No Big Deal

When they played on the NME New Breed tour in Autumn 2014, this Glasgow duo were full of promise – and they continue to deliver. 'No Big Deal' is an airy, laidback, guitar-led ballad with shades of Howling Bells and The Smashing Pumpkins. It's charming, too. "Sleep with me because we share a sense of humour/That and your bed", deadpans Stina Tweeddale. A stopgap between last year's self-titled debut and its follow-up, this will do nicely.

Greg Cochrane, Editor, NME.COM

**6. Black Honey**
Madonna

'Madonna', Black Honey's first single since last October's self-titled debut EP, is a bit of a monster. Despite being full of bluesy menace, the song features unashamed pop hooks that come courtesy of singer Izzy Baxter's vocals. "When you pulled out did you think of me?" she sneers, before an ear-splitting chorus explodes with crunching guitar distortion that matches the anger of her lyrics.

James Bentley, writer

7. Lucy Rose
Our Eyes

Last summer, Lucy Rose shared her first new music since 2012's debut album 'Like I Used To'. 'Cover Up' was all chopped-up beats and Björk stylings. While its glitchy rhythm illustrates a subtle hangover from that track, new single 'Our Eyes' isn't quite as experimental, allowing the 25-year-old's tender musings on love to shine: "Lie awake, quiet corner/ Side by side, we follow our minds". It sounds like she's found the perfect balance.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

8. Leon Bridges
Lisa Sawyer

Leon Bridges recorded this track – along with the rest of his forthcoming debut album – in his hometown of Fort Worth, Texas with only vintage equipment. 'Lisa Sawyer's' soothing melody nods heavily to soul legend Sam Cooke. Complete with tender lyrics and gentle backing from organ and saxophone, this is a beautiful tribute to Bridges' mother, who "was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, granted with the name Lisa Sawyer, circa 1963".

Nadia Khomami, Acting News Reporter

9. The Prodigy
Wild Frontier

Off the back of the frightening beats of last month's 'Nasty', The Prodigy are back with the latest taster of their forthcoming sixth album 'The Day Is My Enemy'. It's another banger. Rapid bleeps and drums that recall the 1998 remix of Wildchild's 1995 hit 'Renegade Master' are obliterated when an obscene bassline drops. Thereafter, it's a shock of razor-sharp electronics and Keith Flint's shouted vocals. "Better watch your back", he barks. You heard him.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

10. The Magic Gang
No Fun

The Magic Gang couldn't have picked a less appropriate title for their debut single. Since their inception in 2013, the Brighton group's shows have gained them a reputation as one of the country's most incendiary new bands. 'No Fun' replicates that energy, see-sawing through swirling guitars as Jack Kaye sings about his romantic prospects: "And I'm not the only one who tries to get her, but I might do".

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

ESSENTIAL NEW TRACKS

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11. Warpaint No Way Out (Redux)

After releasing debut album 'The Fool' in 2010, Warpaint kept us waiting four years for last January's self-titled follow-up. Just over 12 months later, the Los Angeles foursome return with 'No Way Out (Redux)', the first in a series of one-off singles due this year. After a low bassline shows off Jenny Lee Lindberg's love of dub, Stella Mozgawa's gargantuan drums kick in like a boot through a door and the song builds into a typically swampy affair.

David Renshaw, Acting Deputy News Editor

12. Joanna Gruesome Honestly Do Yr Worst

This track, taken from forthcoming album 'Peanut Butter', is crunchy and salty-sweet. With MJ from Hookworms producing, this chugging slice of agit-twee indie is the aural equivalent of Belle And Sebastian tooling themselves up for a Friday-night knife fight. The Welsh Music Prize champs skip between sunny screeching and propulsive wall-of-sound Spector-pop with appropriate abandon.

Leonie Cooper, writer

13. Godspeed You! Black Emperor Peasantry Or Light! Inside Of Light!

It's business as usual for the Canadian post-rock brooders on this eight-minute excerpt from upcoming sixth album 'Asunder, Sweet And Other Distress', out in March. Strings glide over cackling guitar feedback. Drums pound militaristically. Eastern melodies creep in the background, drenched in murky reverb. Then, just as all hope seems lost, comes the sort of euphoric climax they've made their calling card.

Al Horner, Assistant Editor, NME.COM

14. Theo Verney Mountain Rose

The 2013 'Heavy Sunn' EP positioned Brighton musician Theo Verney's riff-heavy rock firmly in the Black Sabbath school of thunderous noise. New track 'Mountain Rose' is a more nuanced beast, though, sharing a propensity for rambling guitar lines with Aussie psychers King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard. Built around a driving bassline and Verney's softer-sounding vocals, it crashes towards the chorus before winding back into a hypnotic groove.

Lisa Wright, writer

15. Best Coast California Nights

Best Coast calling their upcoming third album 'California Nights' doesn't scream exciting new ground – the LA duo have been singing about sun, surf and getting stoned since their 2010 debut 'Crazy For You'. However, the title track represents a shift to a more immersive new sound. Beneath Bethany Cosentino's languid vocal, layered guitar and fuzzy drumbeats conjure a groggy atmosphere – like necking a fistful of codeine at a beach party.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor



16. Coves Shot To The Wall

Leamington Spa duo Coves' 2014 debut album, 'Soft Friday', sparkled with glamorous psych-pop. On this, the first track from new EP 'Spectrum', they sound like they've relocated to the Wild West, with spaghetti western guitars piercing Beck Wood's vocals. "Shot to the wall, I don't love you no more", she purrs like a 21st-century Nancy Sinatra, only this time her boots are walking right out that door.

Rhian Daly, Assistant Reviews Editor

17. Yak Something On Your Mind

God bless Yak's frontman, Oli Burslem. In the past month he's become notorious around these parts for various excellent reasons: 1) managing to bust his way into the VIP bit at the NME Awards despite not even having a ticket; 2) almost knocking out several members of his own audience by throwing an organ at them. Now, there's this cover of a song by Greenwich Village folkie Karen Dalton, which rocks like Spiritualized on a monster codeine high.

Matt Wilkinson, New Music Editor

18. Juan Wauters She Might Get Shot

Juan Wauters is a Uruguayan songwriter living in Queens, New York. He moved there 15 years ago, and has spent the years since absorbing the city's musical history. His beloved Ramones influenced the three records he released with The Beets, but his solo work owes more to Greenwich Village folk. This track, from upcoming album 'Who Me?', is his most accomplished yet, there's acoustic guitar, piano and (deserved) canned applause at the end.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

19. Laura Marling Bron-Yr-Aur

Laura Marling's new album 'Short Movie' is infused from beginning to end with the sounds of the more delicate end of '70s rock. It makes perfect sense, then, that for a CD of covers of tracks from Led Zeppelin's 'Physical Graffiti' she's taken on 'Bron-Yr-Aur', an instrumental that's both the band's shortest and prettiest song. Her fingerpicking is exquisite throughout, and the track's dispatched at a pace that would impress Jimmy Page himself.

Tom Howard, Assistant Editor

20. Tyondai Braxton Scout1

In 2009, the year before he left Battles, Tyondai Braxton released 'Central Market', a record full of sprawling experimental compositions. By the sounds of it, his next one – 'HIVE1', out in May – will be even weirder. Over nine minutes, lead single 'Scout1' goes from creaking sounds and hollow drum rolls to a beat driven by womp-womp effects and rapid drums. Dancing to this is near-impossible; there's more fun to be had getting lost in it.

Ben Homewood, Reviews Editor

TheWeek

► EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS IN MUSIC ■ EDITED BY DAN STUBBS

8

Super Furry Animals return

The Cardiff psych-pop heroes announce a May tour – their first for six years – and a re-release for 2000 LP 'Mwng'



It seems appropriate that psych-pop legends Super Furry Animals' first tour in six years will take place in the same week as the UK general election.

The group's most famous song – the expletive-strewn, authority-baiting 'The Man Don't Give A Fuck' – seems more relevant than ever in the wake of five years of Tory-led coalition government, austerity cuts and tax evasion. "It's a battle for civilisation, basically," frontman Gruff Rhys told *NME*, referring to the May 7 poll. "It's terrifying." SFA's multi-instrumentalist Cian Ciarán has already nailed his colours to the mast by joining forces with a host of artists, including former Beta Band frontman Steve Mason, on a protest album called 'Hero, Leader, God', named after anti-capitalist artwork by Russian artist Alexander Kosolapov. ➡

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SFA performing
at the Tim
Festival, Brazil,
October 31, 2003
and (above)
in 1996



The Furries in Ullapool, Scotland, May 27, 2005

"WE'RE CELEBRATING THE FACT THAT WE'RE STILL ALIVE"

Gruff Rhys

Rhys said the five-piece's decision to play their first proper run of shows together this decade was sparked by a couple of upcoming anniversaries they felt they should mark. It's 20 years since the band released their first EP, 'Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwl-llantysiliogogoch (In Space)', and 15 years since their fourth studio album, 'Mwng', which went on to become the best-selling Welsh-language album ever. That record, famously commended in the Houses Of Parliament in a 2000 early-day motion, is being reissued as a two-disc and triple-vinyl set by Domino on May 1, which also happens to be International Workers' Day. Rhys also pointed out that 2015 is the Year of the Goat, tying in nicely with 'Mwng's pipe-smoking cover star, one of a series of iconic images drawn by long-time collaborator and fellow countryman Pete Fowler. The gigs kick off the same day with the first of two consecutive shows at Cardiff University, before the band head to Glasgow O2 Academy (May 5), Manchester Albert Hall (6) and London's O2 Academy Brixton (8).

The Furries ceased recording and going on the road together after 2009's 'Dark Days/Light

Years', but never announced an official split. Since then, the members have been busy with various other projects – the most high-profile being Rhys' solo career and ongoing work with Boom Bip as conceptual electro outfit Neon Neon. A recent book, *Rise Of The Super Furry Animals* by journalist Ric Rawlins, has also renewed interest in the band, who racked up 19 UK Top 40 hit singles between 1996 and 2005.

Rhys said the performances would act as a "retrospective" and that "it will be good just to play and hang out again. We'll probably be doing a different set every night and songs off all our nine studio albums. We'll be doing quite a lot of 'Mwng' because it's fun to play, but probably not the whole thing." And despite the prospect of performing some songs he's not played for almost two decades, he was confident of being up to the task. "Time flies very quickly and it all feels incredibly recent," he added. "We can celebrate that we're still alive and enjoy the songs that we're still able to play."

He wouldn't say whether there was a future for the reanimated band beyond the dates, adding, "It's all been a bit last minute, so these gigs we've got booked are all we're doing for now that we know. Everyone's busy with other stuff. We all have very different lives and it would be difficult to recreate the intensity without being in the studio for 12 months at a time."

The singer also confirmed that there were no plans to perform any new material on the tour. However, guitarist Huw 'Bunf' Bunford, who recently composed the music for the Bafta-winning short film *The Bigger Picture* by Daisy Jacobs, hopes that this burst of activity will lead to the band doing more stuff in the future. "These gigs will remind people of what we are all about," he said. "Doing another album? I would personally love to. But we'll just have to wait and see..." ■ ALAN WOODHOUSE

PROPS! SHOW ME MAGIC

SFA are renowned for their stunning stage sets. Here are some elements we'd like to see again...

40ft evil bear

The inflatable critter appeared in the brief clip posted online to trail the band's comeback. The massive version of the furry cover star of 1997's 'Radiation' was initially joined by a companion, the 'good' version, but he burst long ago.



'Golden Retriever', and wore them on the subsequent tour to promote the 'Phantom Power' album.

Gruff's Power Rangers helmet

The singer took to wearing this while singing live favourite 'Slow Life'. "It's very handy when you're playing for hostile audiences, because you can be hit with a can and not feel a thing," he explained.



Yetis

The group first donned the costumes in the video for 2003 single



THE MINI INTERVIEW



Gus Unger-Hamilton

Alt-J

You've just been announced to headline Latitude – how are you feeling about it?

"We're super excited. Latitude is like the Alt-J festival. We've gone from the Lake Stage to the 6 Music stage to the main stage. They've always supported us... it's a leftfield festival."

What's in store for the show?

"We're gonna play the songs. Probably no pyro, but definitely some light-o. The festival's really near Southwold, and I went on holiday there with my friends after GCSEs when I was 15 and got outrageously drunk, so it's really fun going back to that part of the world."

Are you thinking about the third album yet?

"Nothing's been written formally, but we're fucking around with some stuff. It's sounding great!"

You've slipped an old song, 'Leon', into recent sets – why?

"We wanted to do something special for the O2, so we thought, let's bust out 'Leon'. We've always liked it, but it's never really fitted in on any of the albums. It's going to be a regular feature of our set for the moment."

Did you meet anyone fun at the Brits?

"I met [Labour MP] Harriet Harman! She asked us for a photo – that was the highlight of my night."

■ LEONIE COOPER

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The Taming Of The Shrew by William Shakespeare

"You know how at awkward dinner parties someone will have a play to do as a group? You could pass time on tour doing that. We'd start with *The Taming Of The Shrew*."

BOXSET

Gilmore Girls

"I've seen it all before, but it's amazing. The dialogue is so fast and so smart, and there are some good pop-culture references in it."



FILM

Taken

"It's got Liam Neeson in it and it's the most violent film. It's all so unnecessary – he kills *hundreds* of people and not that many need to die. I wanted to watch it weekly, but I haven't got round to it."

GAME

Backgammon

"We always talk about getting into it but never have. Dom [Boyce, drummer] swears by it, but he's never got the board out. He gives it the large one about backgammon *all* the time."

HOME COMFORT

Marmite

"When I was in Asia and Australia, I took a jar. We'd been touring for so long so I took that as my sort of comfort blanket. Marmite's the one."

► Peace continue their UK tour with three dates at Newcastle Cluny this week (March 5, 6, 7)

Mark my words...

At the 6 Music Festival, The Fall's Mark E Smith talks mobile etiquette, selfie sticks and why Arctic Monkeys flunked the School Of Rock

What can you tell us about your new album, Mark?

"It's good, we finished it this week. The title is 'Sublingual Tablet'. It was going to be called 'Dedication Not Medication' but it looked a bit like a Barclays advert."

This will be your 31st studio album. Do you set out to make each one different?

"Yeah, pretty much. This one took quite long, about four or five months, but it's all relative. Tour managers think I'm quick because they've worked with New Order and it took them about five years. I know when an album's good now, and this one is great."

You once said that you refused to have a mobile phone because they've "ruined modern manners". Have you got one yet?

"I have not! The manners thing's got worse. People think they can just text you if they've got bad news. It's not on. As for people taking pictures at gigs, that's just weird. Why would you do that? What do they do with them?"

What about selfies, do you get asked for those?

"Only when I go to Manchester. It happened last summer – I was walking to meet a fella about some business and got to the pub and it was fucking jam-packed with all these Pixies fans. I am totally oblivious to these things, but it turns out Pixies cover one of

our songs ['Big New Prinz'], and all these fans wanted pictures. It's fucking weird. I never even liked Pixies."

Are you aware of the existence of the selfie stick?

"What the fuck is that?! They get what? A better angle for the picture? Fucking hell. You can't say anything to them either, can you."

Sleaford Mods are on the bill here. They're often compared to The Fall. Are you a fan?

"I do like them actually, they're alright."

What's your take on the argument about the lack of working-class people in music nowadays?

"It's news to me, but to be honest I said about 12 years ago all this was happening, Blair started it. The posh dads don't say to their kids any more, 'Don't be in a group.' They see U2 and they're saying, 'Be in a group, make money.'"

So they see it as a career?

"Some of the groups we play with at festivals, they're so fucking (sighs)... I mean, the Arctic Monkeys, come on. They've been to music college [this is not true]. They've got degrees in rock music [this isn't true either]. I think some of them have got passes in The Fall. It's all about daddy-o. The amount of cunts I come across... I get sent these magazines with all this advice for new bands and it'll have a list and it's: 'Number one, get a decent bank account.' It's like applying to university. There was always privilege in music, but nowadays you don't have a chance in hell." ■ JON BENNETT



"TAKING PICTURES
AT GIGS, THAT'S
JUST WEIRD"
Mark E Smith

Mark E Smith at the 6 Music Festival in Gateshead, and (above) with The Fall

After months of “weird separation” living in LA, Laura Marling is back in Britain with a new approach for album five

Short stories

Until about three months ago, Laura Marling was living in LA, where she'd been for the past two-and-a-half years. But on a frosty London afternoon in late January – the day before her 25th birthday – she speaks with palpable distaste about California's “lack of cloud cover, the relentlessly, obnoxiously blue sky”. Pulled up on her particularly British brand of ingratitude, she laughs and argues her point: “You don't appreciate them! A blue sky in London is worth so much more, I think.”

If Marling's time in LA was good for one thing, it was giving her perspective, something her forthcoming fifth album, ‘Short Movie’ (due March 23) makes clear she had to fight for. She originally moved to LA to see what it would be like to live in one place for a prolonged period of time, having been largely itinerant since she started touring in her teens. But something about the sense of permanence proved creatively paralysing: for six months she didn't write a note. “I couldn't do any work,” she says. “There



Laura in the short film *Woman Driver*, 2015

was nothing I really wanted to do musically, so I couldn't honestly call myself a musician at that time – I was sort of self-flagellatingly not telling people that I was a musician. I got a sick pleasure out of doing that.”

What might have induced a crisis for some musicians turned out to be liberating for Marling. Taking a break from writing freed her up to “have all these quite vulnerable experiences”, she says: sleeping in her car under the Joshua Tree night; discovering yoga and meditation. Her mind open to the possibilities of life, she focused on educating herself and learning a trade. When she was rejected from a prestigious university's writing course, she threw herself into environmental and social-justice issues – though she won't say exactly what; she wants to keep her musical and activist sides separate.

Meanwhile, she pushed music further and further to the back of her mind. “I think I got

“I WAS LIKE, IS BEING A MUSICIAN WORTHWHILE TO THE PLANET?”

a bit worthy about whether being a musician was worthwhile to the planet in any way,” she says. “Not like in an eco way, but I was like, ‘Who do I think I am that I can just get up every day and play the guitar? That's bullshit, I should be doing something more important.’ But actually, that thought of mine was the most self-important thought I've ever had, and only after being away from music for six months did I come back and think, ‘Actually, it's pretty fucking great what I do, and I'm pretty fucking lucky to be doing it.’”

After giving her ego “a good bashing”, it was time to come back down to earth. “Moving to LA and meeting people who live and act on instinct is amazing, but as an

English person you think, ‘No, I can't keep living on instinct, otherwise I'm going to float off the planet.’”

‘Short Movie’ was recorded at Urchin Studios in Hackney, east London. It's the first record Marling has produced herself, but she's characteristically blunt about it. “This album didn't require a lot of producing. It was quite simple stuff: go in, do a take, put some strings on it, fuck with the sounds.” After barely listening to any music while she was in LA, she hammered Captain Beefheart while writing and producing ‘Short Movie’, though the only trace of her having ingested ‘Big Eyed Beans From Venus’ is a heavier reliance on electric guitar and a strong sense of existential panic. “It's settled into part of my being,” says Marling of the latter. “I feel less isolated in London because it's not such a sprawling, pedestrian-less existence, so I don't feel this weird separation from the rest of humanity that I did in LA.” America's – and academia's – loss is our gain. ■ LAURA SNAPES

13

SUPERFOOD, SPECTOR AND MORE TO PLAY TOPMAN 24

Events include DJ sets, pub quizzes and ‘hangover breakfasts’. Pick up wristbands on the day

Superfood (below), Spector, Waze & Odyssey, Bondax and Star Slinger are to take part in 24-hour takeovers of four major cities featuring gigs, talks, DJ sets and quizzes. Topman 24 hits Glasgow on March 10, then Sheffield (12), Brighton (17)

and Manchester (19). Shoppers can collect free wristbands from central Topman stores in each city from 12pm on the day of the event.

Visit topman.com/topman24 for more information



STAYING IN

THE BEST MUSIC ON TV, RADIO AND ONLINE THIS WEEK



Björk is interviewed on BBC 6 Music on March 8

Björk

Army Of Me

►LISTEN BBC 6 Music, 1pm, March 8

The Icelandic musician's retrospective at New York's MoMA opens today. To celebrate that – and International Women's Day – 6 Music will broadcast an in-depth interview with the lady herself. Chatting to Miranda Sawyer, Björk will discuss her latest album 'Vulnicura', technology, nature and more.

Zun Zun Egui X-Posure

►LISTEN XFM, 10pm, March 5
The Bristol quintet released second album 'Shackles' Gift' earlier this year. They'll recreate its highlights – from 'African Tree' to 'Late Bloomer' – with the same furious energy as their live shows in X-Posure's One Night Stand slot.

Record Store Day X-Posure

►LISTEN XFM, 10pm, March 10
Banquet Records' Jon Tolley joins John Kennedy in the XFM studios as the releases for this year's Record Store Day are announced. The pair will talk through 2015's list of limited-edition releases. You should start saving up now.

Janis Joplin

Janis Joplin & Big Brother – 900 Nights

►WATCH Sky Arts, 4:10am, March 7

Janis Joplin wasn't always a solo musician. The Texas-born singer-songwriter initially found fame fronting legendary San Franciscan psych-rock group Big Brother And The Holding Company, with whom she recorded the seminal album 'Cheap Thrills'. This documentary looks into her time with the group and her ascent to solo stardom.

Dutch Uncles The Radcliffe & Maconie Show

►LISTEN BBC 6 Music, 1pm, March 5

The Manchester band recently celebrated the release of their latest album 'O Shudder' with a half-time penalty shootout at a non-league football match. Expect more fun and games as the group drop by the BBC 6 Music studios.



GOING OUT

THE BEST LIVE EVENTS

THIS WEEK



All We Are

The Liverpool trio give their self-titled debut album another airing with dates in Manchester and Brighton.

►DATES Manchester Deaf Institute (March 9), Brighton Green Door Store (10)

►TICKETS Manchester £8 from NME.COM/tickets with 80p booking fee; Brighton sold out

Lucy Rose

The singer-songwriter heads to some intimate venues to preview the follow-up to her 2012 debut 'Like I Used To'.

►DATES Tunbridge Wells Forum (March 9), Cardiff Globe (10)

►TICKETS Cardiff £13 from NME.COM/tickets with £1.30 booking fee; Tunbridge Wells sold out

5 TO SEE FOR FREE

1. Leon Bridges

Old Blue Last, London
►March 5, 8pm

2. Remi Miles

Sixty Million Postcards, Bournemouth
►March 5, 8.30pm

3. Mozes & The Firstborn

Lock Tavern, London
►March 7, 5pm

4. Hyde & Beast

Pop Recs Ltd, Sunderland
►March 8, 6pm

5. Fawn Spots

Birthdays, London
►March 10, 8pm

Telefonica

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PRIORITY

O₂

(Left) Kanye and friends onstage at the Brits. (Right) Skepta



THE BRIT AWARDS DON'T LET DONS LIKE SKEPTA IN, BUT HIM AND KANYE KICKED THE DOORS DOWN

BY WILEY

Yeezy taking a posse of MCs onstage as he performed 'All Day' gave the grime scene the platform that was long overdue



The Brits is out of my league. Unless I make another 'Heatwave' [Wiley's Number One single from 2012], or something that'll sell millions and millions for 10 years solid, the Brits are never gonna look at me.

But this year, Kanye West opened a door that's closed to most of us. There's no way Skepta or JME or Novelist or Stormzy were gonna get onstage without Kanye doing that. The doors are still shut in a way, and what he did won't just happen again next year, but people will be more open-minded about the people he got into the building and onstage.

The statement he made at the Brits was: I can walk in and out of here as I like, 'cos I'm Kanye West, even though you don't like me for ranting at Taylor Swift. And what I'm

gonna do, Brits, is bring out a king, Skepta, and 25 MCs from his grime scene, who you wouldn't usually let in here in any shape or form. I'm gonna bring 'em out and let you know they're with me and you cannot stop it.

And that is power. But it's not a power we've got, it's the power Kanye's got. It's amazing. It was a massive statement. Kanye came in and helped my scene make it. And when I say my scene, I just mean people who are part of that culture, rather than us as grime or UK rap or us from the council estate whose parents had milk tokens.

Let's not get it wrong – Craig David, Dizzee Rascal and a few other urban artists have been there. But if that wasn't Kanye it wouldn't have been allowed. I hate saying this – and I'm not hating, because I like this person – but if Tinie Tempah was performing at the Brits, never in a million years would he or his manager even dream of bringing a scene of people behind them. If I called up my manager and said, 'I got this show at the Brits, I'm bringing my whole scene, I need 25 backstage passes', he'd switch off the phone.

In London some people have been hating, saying, 'Why didn't they bust lyrics? Why didn't Kanye get Skepta to spit a 16?' But 25 men are not gonna bust lyrics. Just have a think about that.

I'm gonna go to the Brits next year, not gonna perform or nothing, I'm just gonna go and embrace the Brits because this year I could look and say, 'That's my mates up there, good.' Now the next step is: what song will be made, with Skepta or Kanye that could connect them, so that when the Brits come around again they can perform there again. And that's it, man.

Skepta ain't told me this, but I know what he's thinking. He's looking back at the reason he hasn't been given his dues, he's laughing at all the labels who didn't sign him, and saying to himself, 'I didn't even have to be signed to meet Kanye and for him to bring me and my fam onstage.' It's revenge: 'I've worked hard, I've broken my neck and you don't give it to me, you're killing me. But check this out, Kanye likes me. You lot are wrong.' ■

► Wiley's album 'Snakes & Ladders' is out now on Big Dada

LOST ALBUMS

#64

Jehst

Falling Down (2003)

Chosen by Tom McFarland, Jungle



"J [Josh Lloyd-Watson] and I both grew up with a lot of UK hip-hop and the amazing thing about that scene, especially what Jehst, Task Force and Klashnekoff created with Braintax and people like that, was it was very poetic. American rap at that time was 50 Cent and the like, and I couldn't connect to that. 'Falling Down' is Jehst's second LP and it's just incredible. That whole scene was massively underrated, but what these guys were doing in Huddersfield, Sheffield and all around the north of England was just great and something I could connect to. I love Jehst's flow. He's really honest, it's a really honest voice."

► THE DETAILS

► RELEASE DATE

October 27, 2003

► LABEL

Low Life

► BEST TRACKS

Brimstone

Rock, Intro (Liquor Smoked

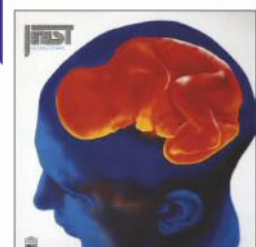
Sentiments)

► WHERE TO FIND IT

Second-hand record shops or online

► LISTEN ONLINE

On Spotify



What, no banjos? The stadium-filling folkies turn up their guitars on the follow-up to 'Babel'

Mumford & Sons

Mumford & Sons at Air Studios, London, November 2014



What you're about to read may shock you. Having sold millions of records, won armfuls of awards and headlined festivals on the back of their take on bluegrass and Americana, Mumford & Sons keyboard player Ben Lovett has an announcement to make: "There are no banjos on album three."

It's all change in the house of Mumford. Not only are the band ditching their trademark acoustic plucking in favour of Fleetwood Mac-inspired electric guitars and piledriving drums, they're also branching out from producer Markus Dravs, who was behind their 2009 debut 'Sigh No More' and its 2012 follow-up 'Babel', instead enlisting members of The National and Simian Mobile Disco man James Ford.

Work began on 'Wilder Mind' – due for release on May 4 – after the five-month hiatus that followed the final 'Babel' tour date. "It could have ended up being five years but we only needed five months to reset," explains Lovett from his adopted home city of New York.

Initial sessions for the third album took place with The National's Aaron Dessner, in the Brooklyn garage where he's also recorded the likes of Sharon Van Etten. Self-confessed

fanboys of Dessner's band, Mumford & Sons met The National on the touring circuit. "Then, on one drunken night in Chicago, we managed to convince Aaron to give us some of his time, his wisdom and his experience," says Ben. With Dessner encouraging the band to work in a much more collaborative way than ever before, they wrote half the album across five scattered weeks in his home studio.

When it came to the actual recording, the band decided there was only one place to go. "We've thought about recording in America a few times but we've always circled back to the

fact that we're a British band. We're proud of the fact that we're from London, and that's our roots," says Ben. The band booked themselves into Eastcote Studios, where they recorded their debut, but with Aaron still on tour with The National, James Ford, producer of Arctic Monkeys and Haim, stepped in to take the reins. "It was a two-phase approach. Aaron helped us figure out what we wanted to say with the songs and our sounds, and James helped carry it over the finish line," says Ben.

The band's sound is, he says, more expansive than ever and decidedly heavier, thanks to the shift in

"IT'S A VERY NATURAL DEPARTURE FROM THE ROOTSIER STUFF" BEN LOVETT

instrumentation. Alongside the no-banjos rule, the group are employing a full drumkit instead of frontman Marcus Mumford's beleaguered kick drum. "We've had our standard line-up of instruments for the last six years and we felt like that was our palette,

but we started picking up other stuff," says Ben. "It's a very natural departure from some of that rootsier stuff."

First single 'Believe' is a twinkling stadium belter. 'The Wolf' boasts a stratospheric chorus, and 'Tompkins Square Park' has thundering rock riffs reminiscent of The War On Drugs. 'Babel Mark II' this is not. "When we were working on 'Babel', 'Sigh No More' was our starting point, but

we didn't start from 'Babel' and build from that for the third album," says Ben. 'Wilder Mind', then, promises to be Mumford & Sons as you've never heard them before – that Reading & Leeds headline slot might be louder than anyone expected. ■ LEONIE COOPER

► THE DETAILS

- **TITLE** Wilder Mind
- **RELEASE DATE** May 4
- **LABEL** Gentlemen Of The Road/Island
- **PRODUCER** James Ford
- **RECORDED** Eastcote Studios, London
- **TRACKS INCLUDE** Tompkins Square Park, The Wolf, Only Love, Ditmus, Wilder Mind, Just Smoke, Believe
- **BEN LOVETT SAYS** "We've used a lot more drums. It's almost like we discovered the drumkit for the first time."

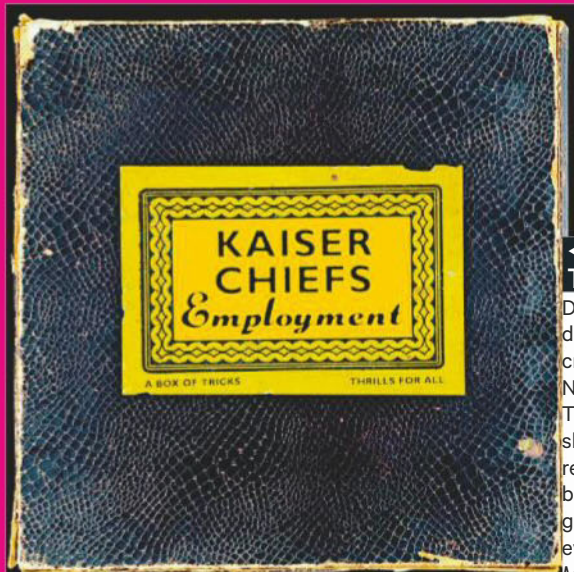


(From left) Ted Dwane, Marcus Mumford, Ben Lovett and Winston Marshall

ANATOMY OF AN ALBUM



"INSTANT CATCHINESS WAS REQUIRED"
Ricky Wilson



STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE

Designed by veteran art director Cally – whose credits include records by Nick Drake, Scott Walker, Tricky and more – the sleeve was designed to resemble the battered box of a 1940s board game. A deluxe edition even came with a wad of Monopoly-style money.

THIS WEEK...

Kaiser Chiefs: Employment

Ten years on from the Leeds hopefuls' debut, we revisit the record that made British guitar music fun again

THE BACKGROUND

It was 2003 and Parva's career was on the skids. The Leeds band had released their debut album '22' to general indifference and been dropped: their shot at the big time had failed. Yet somehow, they were granted a second chance. Rechristening themselves Kaiser Chiefs, the band met The Smiths and Blur producer Stephen Street, who had called the band on the strength of their demo CD and suggested they work together. James Sandom, who became the band's manager, was also blown away by them. "I went to see a couple of shows and you were just bombarded by a series of potential hit singles," he said. In summer 2004 they entered Old Chapel Studios in their native city to record their first album under the new name, with rather more encouraging results.

FIVE FACTS

- 1 It took a year for the album to secure its highest chart position – Number Two. Originally going in at Number Three, it wasn't until the band played the Brit Awards 12 months later that the album finally clawed its way up one place.
- 2 The motorbike revving at the beginning of the Blur-ish 'Saturday Night' came courtesy of Graham Coxon. The bike is credited in the liner notes as a 1935 Kaiser 'Chief' 750cc Manx TT Works Racer.
- 3 'Caroline, Yes' is an answer track to The Beach Boys' 'Caroline, No', from the 'Pet Sounds' album. The Kaisers' song was originally named 'Hail To The Chief'.
- 4 The title 'Employment' was an expression of the band's commitment to their chosen career. Drummer Nick Hodgson commented: "Instead of working in a pub or something, our employment would be the album."
- 5 Mark Ronson joined forces with Lily Allen to cover the first single 'Oh My God' in 2007. The video for the Top 10 track featured a cameo from the Kaiser Chiefs, who appeared alongside a cartoon Lily.

LYRIC ANALYSIS

"A friend of a friend he got beaten/He looked the wrong way at a policeman/ Would never have happened to Smeaton/An old Leodensian" – 'I Predict A Riot'

This was based on a real incident at the band's club night, Pigs. Smeaton is John Smeaton, the Leeds-born civil engineer; Leodensian is the word for someone who comes from the city.

"Ppp-pneumothorax is a word that is long/ They're just trying to put the pun back into punctured lung" – 'Saturday Night'

Leeds was a pretty rowdy place 10 years ago. 'Saturday Night' details another night on the town, complete with booze, fags, a new outfit and a punctured lung to end it all.

"Everyday I love you less and less/ It's clear to see that you've become obsessed" – 'Every Day I Love You Less And Less'

The band described the album's third single as a "hate ballad". It's a bitter attack on a stalker-ish ex.

WHAT WE SAID THEN

"This is Rotten Britannia, replete with flawed intelligence dossiers, rain and pain." Mike Sterry, NME, 5 March 2005

WHAT WE SAY NOW

Though they never quite managed to kick off the Britpop revival they were hoping for, Kaiser Chiefs made British guitar music fun again. 'Employment' is dumb, juvenile and relentless – and all the better for it.

FAMOUS FAN

"They ascended into pop superstardom with a volley of truly remarkable singles. While we couldn't get a single on the radio, these guys seemed to be all over it." Kele Okereke, Bloc Party

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"A lot of the songs on that record were written purely with the gigs we were doing in mind... There's a lot of vying for attention and instant catchiness required when you're first on of five bands at six o'clock and nobody has ever heard of you. Stripy blazers can also help with that." Ricky Wilson, February 2015

THE AFTERMATH

Where Parva tripped, Kaiser Chiefs triumphed. The album scored NME and Ivor Novello awards for Best Album, and saw them declared Best British Group, Best British Rock Act and Best Live Act at the 2006 Brit Awards. In one year they had become the biggest band in the UK – a title they've recently been at pains to reclaim.

THE DETAILS

►RECORDED Old Chapel Studios, Leeds ►RELEASE DATE March 7, 2005 ►LABEL B-Unique ►LENGTH 44:12 ►PRODUCERS Stephen Street, Stephen Harris ►HIGHEST UK CHART POSITION 2 ►UK SALES 2.4 million ►SINGLES Oh My God, I Predict A Riot, Every Day I Love You Less And Less, Modern Way, You Can Have It All ►TRACKLISTING ►1. Every Day I Love You Less And Less ►2. I Predict A Riot ►3. Modern Way ►4. Na Na Na Na Naa ►5. You Can Have It All ►6. Oh My God ►7. Born To Be A Dancer ►8. Saturday Night ►9. What Did I Ever Give You? ►10. Time Honoured Tradition ►11. Caroline, Yes ►12. Team Mate

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"My beautiful cape was tied too tight! But nothing can stop me and love really lifted me up!"

Madonna on Instagram, after falling down stairs onstage at the Brits.
She should have posted it to Tumblr

THE NUMBERS

£5.8m

Live viewing figures for the Brit Awards on ITV – an increase of 1.2 million from 2014

18

Hours Skrillex and Diplo spent DJing in Santa Monica on February 27. It was meant to be 24, but police cut the party short

9

Times in a row Frank Turner, added to the bill last week, will have played Reading & Leeds – a festival record

7 or 8

Number of songs Will 'The Fresh Prince' Smith says he's recorded with Kanye West



WHO THE FUCK IS...



The Singles

Take one Hollywood A-lister, a few chums from LA bands and – hey presto – The Singles, the new project from Scarlett Johansson, Este Haim, Holly Miranda, Kendra Morris and Julia Haltigan. **What do they sound like?** A bit Grimes, a bit Go-Go's, a bit Bangles – "ultra pop but also a little ironic, a little in-on-the-joke", says Johansson. **Can't believe that name hasn't already been taken...** Neither could Vincent Frederick, frontman of LA band The Singles for the past 16 years. He's hit the supergroup with a cease-and-desist order.

+ GOOD WEEK +



Roger Tullgren

The Swedish headbanger has been awarded disability benefits for an addiction to heavy metal. His condition caused him to attend nearly 300 concerts last year, leaving him unable to hold down a job, according to psychologists. Rock'n'dole!

- BAD WEEK -



The Amazing Snakeheads

The Glasgow rockers announced that their second line-up had met the same fate as the first. Sole permanent member Dale Barclay swore the band are "never, ever to return". But that's what they all say...

IN BRIEF

Thicke as thieves?

Robin Thicke redefined the term 'show trial' when he played a medley of U2, Bob Marley and Beatles tracks in court, where he stands accused of ripping off Marvin Gaye's 'Got To Give It Up' in global smash 'Blurred Lines'.

Desert blues

The Joshua tree in the Mojave Desert, made famous in photoshoots for U2's 1987 album of the same name, has been vandalised. A fan removed a gnarled branch with a hacksaw.

► Find these stories and more on **NME.COM**

Smashing pop kin

Billy Corgan wants a return to the good old days of tribalism. "There's a very cosy relationship between rock stars and pop stars – and I don't think that's a good relationship," says the Smashing Pumpkins frontman. "Everybody belongs on their own side of the street for a good reason."

Official RECORD STORE Chart

TOP 40 ALBUMS MARCH 1, 2015

NEW 01

Public Service Broadcasting The Race For Space

TEST CARD RECORDINGS

The London duo take the top spot with their second album, on which they sample a John F Kennedy speech and NASA's ground-control communications and mix them with their own ambient soundscapes.

NEW 2	Physical Graffiti Led Zeppelin RHINO
NEW 3	O Shudder Dutch Uncles MEMPHIS INDUSTRIES
4	Royal Blood Royal Blood WARNER BROS
5	I Love You, Honeybear Father John Misty BELLA UNION
NEW 6	The Killer Instinct Black Star Riders NUCLEAR BLAST
7	In The Lonely Hour Sam Smith CAPITOL
8	X Ed Sheeran ASYLUM
9	Wanted On Voyage George Ezra COLUMBIA
NEW 10	Citizen Zombie The Pop Group FREAKS R US
NEW 11	Music In Exile Songhoy Blues TRANSGRESSIVE
12	Shadows In The Night Bob Dylan COLUMBIA
13	Girls In Peacetime Want To Dance Belle & Sebastian MATADOR
14	Hozier Hozier ISLAND
15	Mount The Air The Unthanks RABBLERouser
NEW 16	A Perfect Contradiction Paloma Faith RCA
NEW 17	Return To Forever The Scorpions SEVENONE MUSIC
18	Lost In The Dream The War On Drugs SECRETLY CANADIAN
19	Happy People Peace COLUMBIA
20	Stay Gold First Aid Kit COLUMBIA
21	Liquid Spirit Gregory Porter BLUE NOTE
22	Smoke & Mirrors Imagine Dragons INTERSCOPE
23	Terraplane Steve Earle & The Dukes NEW WEST
24	1989 Taylor Swift EMI
NEW 25	Sonic Highways Foo Fighters RCA
26	Ibeyi Ibeyi XL RECORDINGS
27	Chapter One Ella Henderson SYCO MUSIC
NEW 28	A Thousand Miles Of Midnight Mark Lanegan Band HEAVENLY
29	Title Meghan Trainor EPIC
30	Wonder Days Thunder EAR MUSIC
31	Uptown Special Mark Ronson COLUMBIA
NEW 32	Petals Darlia B UNIQUE
33	Modern Blues The Waterboys HARLEQUIN AND CLOWN
NEW 34	All Over The World – The Very Best Of ELO EPIC
35	No Cities To Love Sleater-Kinney SUB POP
36	Great Big Flamingo Burning Moon The Wave Pictures MOSHI MOSHI
NEW 37	The Stone Roses The Stone Roses SILVERTONE
38	Live At The Music Hall Phosphorescent DEAD OCEANS
NEW 39	Coming Up For Air Kodaline B UNIQUE/RCA
40	Lazaretto Jack White XL RECORDINGS

The Official Charts Company compiles the Official Record Store Chart from sales through 100 of the UK's best independent record shops from Sunday to Sunday.

TOP OF THE SHOPS



THIS WEEK VINTAGE & VINYL FOLKESTONE FOUNDED 2014

WHY IT'S GREAT As well as old and new records, V&V offers vintage wines, turntables and even jewellery.
TOP SELLER LAST WEEK 'The Dark Side Of The Moon' – Pink Floyd
THEY SAY "Our aim is to help the younger generation get excited about vinyl and offer existing enthusiasts a diverse choice."

SOUNDTRACK OF MY LIFE



James
Blake



Pharrell
Williams



Merrill Garbus

Tune-Yards

**THE FIRST SONG I
REMEMBER HEARING**
**'Prelude and Fugue
No.1 in C, The
Well-Tempered
Clavier' - Bach**

"My mom is a classical pianist and she used to practise this song every day when I was younger, so it's deeply ingrained in me. I start crying pretty instantaneously when I hear it. It brings me back - like, 'Oh my god, I'm two again!'"

**THE FIRST SONG I
FELL IN LOVE WITH**
**'Beat It' - Michael
Jackson**

"I was about three when 'Thriller' came out, and my sister and I used to sing along to 'Beat It' in the car. Those two words were the only part we knew."

**THE FIRST ALBUM
I BOUGHT**
**'Electric Youth' -
Debbie Gibson**

"I was obsessed with Debbie Gibson and I don't know why. She was a total teen-pop

icon when I was growing up in the '80s. She was very clean-cut and had a piercing soprano voice, perfect for a girl of eight or nine to emulate."

**THE SONG THAT
MADE ME WANT
TO BE IN A BAND**
Theme from Jem

"I remember watching this cartoon in 1986. Jem was

"I WAS OBSESSED WITH DEBBIE GIBSON"

'truly outrageous', as the chorus goes. It was duelling rock bands - Jem And The Holograms versus The Misfits and The Stingers - and they all had the craziest cartoon hair and outfits. It was super punk."

**THE SONG I CAN NO
LONGER LISTEN TO**
**'Closer To Fine' -
Indigo Girls**

"Because at a certain point in my life, all I listened to was

Ani DiFranco and the Indigo Girls. This song in particular soundtracked the end of high school and the beginning of college. It's the anthem of anthems for lesbian culture, feminist culture and any kind of underground counterculture."

**THE SONG THAT
MAKES ME WANT
TO DANCE**

**'Double Trouble' - The
Roots feat. Mos Def**

"It's just the bounciest song. I think it came into my life around 1999, in the middle of college, and I took to it straight away. It's a dance-with-friends song more than a club song, though. It has a fat beat that you can bug out to."

**THE SONG I DO
AT KARAOKE**
**'Just My Imagination' -
The Temptations**

"Honestly, I save my voice and don't sing along to things very often. But this is the most beautiful song ever. The melody is gorgeous, then there's the crushing bridge where you realise the title of the song is indeed the reality. It's an utterly heartbreaking song about loneliness."

**THE SONG I CAN'T
GET OUT OF
MY HEAD**
**'Retrograde' -
James Blake**

"I'm late to the James Blake train. I was a doubter before and didn't understand the hype, but I've realised it's such a breath of fresh air. His vision is really clear and I think that's rare. I think there's a reason 'Retrograde' is famous: it's so focused, so quiet, sparse and confident."

**THE SONG I WISH
I HAD WRITTEN**
**'Happy' - Pharrell
Williams**

"This song is not as simple as it seems: the background vocals in the chorus form quite a complex chord progression. It's the way the word 'happy' is stretched out so it doesn't feel one-dimensional. Maybe it feels like happiness itself is multifaceted."

**THE SONG THAT
REMINDS ME OF
WORKING AT AN
ARTS CAMP FOR KIDS**
**'Zen Archer' -
Todd Rundgren**

"I worked in a kids' art camp after I quit puppeteering. I lived between my parents' house, my aunt and uncle's basement and my car. I was depressed and I listened to a lot of Todd Rundgren. He's an example of someone reinventing himself, not being afraid to lose the image that others have of him."

**THE SONG THAT
REMINDS ME OF
BEING A NANNY**
**'Syd's Snooze Room' -
Kurt Weisman**

"When I was a nanny on Martha's Vineyard, I listened almost exclusively to Kurt Weisman's 'More Is More'. I dubbed it onto cassette for my Walkman. It was important for me to take a walk in the woods whenever I could, just to get my space away from a two-year-old."

**THE SONG I WANT
PLAYED AT
MY FUNERAL**
**'Radio Generation' -
Pat Jordache**

"I've asked Patrick Grégoire, who goes by Pat Jordache, to play this at my funeral. We used to have a band together and this was one of his first solo songs. It conveys a belief in the power of music and a call to not give up or give in."



Todd
Rundgren

Rad ar

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NME
NEW
BAND
OF THE WEEK

20

Yung

The Danish band “can’t wait” to bring their angry, cathartic punk to the UK

Iwouldn’t describe myself as an angry guy,” says Mikkel Holm Silkjær down the phone from his apartment in Aarhus, the second largest city in Denmark. Listen to his band, Yung, and you may not believe him.

In the quartet’s grotty practice space in an office block, 20-year-old singer and guitarist Mikkel screams frustrated lyrics as guitarist Emil Zethsen, bassist Tobias Guldberg Tarp and drummer Frederik Nybo Veile play Nirvana-ish grunge, maniacal punk and clattering hardcore over melodies that recall cult New Jersey band The Feelies. Their debut UK release (the six-track ‘Alter’ EP, out this week), includes scream-along centrepiece ‘Nobody Cares’, the guttural ‘A Stain’ and ‘Don’t Cry’, on which Mikkel sounds ready to throttle someone as he screams, “*You just have to realise pain is part of life*”. Is he sure he’s not angry? “Yes. I use music to put my frustrations out; sometimes I’m surprised at how angry the songs are.”

▼
ON
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‘Alter’ EP

Perhaps Yung’s aggression comes from Mikkel having been around heavy music all his life. “My father plays in a [Danish noise] band called Fossils,” he says. “I remember when I was four, he’d pick me up from kindergarten, take me to their rehearsals and put me on a drumkit in the corner.” He was later introduced to ’80s punk by his uncle, then started going to gigs aged eight and was blown away by the energy: “I was far too young, but everyone in the scene knew me.”

By the age of 16 he’d started his first band, Urban Achievers (“we played insane hardcore”) and formed two others, Happy Hookers For Jesus and Fright Eye. He constantly wrote songs “for a future band” until forming Yung – named after a nickname given to him by an older friend – last year.

How many Yung songs has he written? “Damn, man, lots – iTunes says 136.” This prodigious work rate has helped Yung become the leaders of the thriving Aarhus punk scene, which is changing the landscape of Danish indie music. Iceage exploded out of Copenhagen in 2012, and now Yung are poised to put their hometown on the map. “I can’t wait to come to the UK,” says Mikkel. “Punk can have a really big impact.” ■ **BEN HOMEWOOD**

► THE DETAILS

- **BASED** Aarhus, Denmark
- **FOR FANS OF** Nirvana, Iceage
- **SOCIAL** yungbandstuff.com
- **BUY** The ‘Alter’ EP is out now on Tough Love
- **SEE THEM LIVE** UK dates are planned later this year
- **BELIEVE IT OR NOT** Yung’s rehearsals annoy the local fly-fishing club. “It’s next door. They get pissed off with the noise and shout, ‘Don’t you have anything better to do, you fucking long-haired bastards?’” Mikkel says

MORE NEW MUSIC

Summer Heart

Lo-fi 'summerwave' prodigy David Alexander heads over from his native Sweden in March for a rare London show. His brand of Washed Out-inspired electronica truly sounds like a sweltering day in the sun; the hazy synths and sweet pop vocals of latest track 'Thinkin' Of U' make easy work of curing those winter blues.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/summerheartmusic

► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/summer-heart

► **SEE HIM LIVE** London Birthdays (March 26)

NME BUZZ BAND OF THE WEEK

Criminal Hygiene

LA trio Criminal Hygiene have been around since 2011, but recent stints supporting The Orwells, Meatbodies and Twin Peaks have seen their stock rise. Their single 'Turpentine' (out on New Professor Music) showcases their breezy'n'boozy rationale perfectly, while the flipside – a cover of Devo's 'Uncontrollable Urge' – comes on like a long-lost Replacements classic.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/crmnlhygne

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/newprofessor

Ticktock

A curious mixture of organic drums, sedated electronic melodies and torpid vocals form the crux of Sebastian Zieler's forthcoming EP 'TCOLT'. The Copenhagen resident sounds best on lead track 'A-A-A', crooning "We needed fucking up" over a bouncing bassline. It's an off-kilter but endearing take on lo-fi indie pop.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/ticktocksound

► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/ticktockgoestheclock

► **SEE HIM LIVE** London Old Blue Last (March 19)

Ryley Walker

He may be from Chicago, but Ryley Walker is a Brit in



Criminal
Hygiene

everything but passport. Dressing like Donovan and sounding like Nick Drake by way of Bert Jansch and John Martyn, he's in thrall to the homegrown hippy guitar sounds of the 1970s. His stunning debut, 'Primrose Green', is out on March 23 on Dead Oceans.

► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/deadoceans

► **SEE HIM LIVE** London Sebright Arms (April 18), Manchester Castle Hotel (19), Bristol Birdcage (20), Cardiff Ifor Bach (21), Coventry Tin (22), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (23), Brighton Hope & Ruin (24)

Gloss Rejection

Featuring members of London punk bands Weird Menace and No, Gloss Rejection twist their influences into a startling noise. Post-punk and '80s Creation indie inform their riffs and brittle drumbeats, while singer Katy's voice alternates between hushed and howling. A seven-inch is due soon on Hackney label Unwork Records.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/pages/Gloss-Rejection/1461438544075056

► **HEAR THEM** glossrejection.bandcamp.com



Mylets

Columbus, Indiana's Henry Kohen, aka Mylets, builds up layer upon layer of complex instrumentation to create his experimental loop-rock. The results are mesmerising, hypnotic soundscapes that can be odd, loud and beautiful. With an EP collection under his belt, Kohen's first full-length, 'Arizona', is due in April.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/mylets

► **HEAR THEM** mylets.bandcamp.com

Super Luxury

Leeds' Super Luxury have just released their debut album, the modestly titled 'Ten Years Of Solid Applause'. It's a churning piece of unapologetic DIY punk, full of screeching and Fugazi-like spaciousness,

that's more enjoyable than going to the funfair with a hipflask of overproof rum.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/superluxury1

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/superluxury

► **SEE THEM LIVE** Leeds Nation Of Shopkeepers (March 11), Bristol Stag & Hounds (13), Chatham Poco Loco (14), Leeds Brudenell Social Club (21), Manchester Islington Mill (April 4), Liverpool Maguire's Pizza Bar (5), Norwich Owl Sanctuary (18)

Animal Language

Brighton trio Animal Language began drip-feeding us a string of lush psych-pop tracks towards the end of 2014, each



Gloss Rejection

BAND CRUSH

Janet Weiss

Sleater-Kinney



Magic Mouth

"There's a band in Portland called Magic Mouth. They're really great live. Anna, their fantastic drummer, has a real character to her playing, and the singer is a great person who has is very loving and sharing with the audience. Fun band to watch."

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one more drenched in the best bits of Tame Impala than the last. 'Get To Know Her' sparkles with Beatles-y harmonies and off-kilter drums, 'Teardrop Sunshine' swells with beachy rhythms, and 'Experiment' oozes head-swimming riffs.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/animallanguage

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/animallanguageband

White Noise Sound

Swansea six-piece White Noise Sound release their second album 'Like A Pyramid Of Fire' in April, promising to deliver a pulverising wall of sound. Lead track 'Heavy Echo' speaks for itself, while other numbers include the Neu!-indebted 'Step Into The Light' and the heavy techno drone 'Feel It'. Super Furry Animals' Cian Ciarán returns to assist in the album's production, ensuring it will sound every bit as mind-boggling as the band's 2010 debut.

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/white-noise-sound

► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Village Underground (March 16)

Love, Hippies & Gangsters

This curiously titled project is the creation of Turkish

Love, Hippies & Gangsters

musician Yiğit Bülbül, who is "deeply interested in repetitive, spacey and noisy music with synths and guitars". Now based in Dalston, his recently released second EP, titled 'Sun Over Babaluma' (a reference to krautrock legends Can), echoes the sound of '90s psych champions like Spiritualized and The Brian Jonestown Massacre.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/lovehippiesandgangsters

► **HEAR THEM** lovehippiesandgangsters.bandcamp.com

Jimmy Whispers

Chicago seems to be full of inventive young things inspired by fuzzy glam rock. Hot on the heels of punk stoners Twin Peaks comes Jimmy Whispers, a long-haired, organ-playing weirdo who's two parts Ariel Pink, one part John Maus. New single 'Summer In Pain' sees him warbling over haphazard keys and isolated drumbeats. An album of the same name is out later this month.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/summerinpain

► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/jimmy-whispers-1



Jimmy Whispers

PAMs

PAMs' riffs are drawn from the poppier end of punk, their lyrics are silly ("Down by the river/There used to be dogs") and their rhythms are fast and insistent. Live, they swap instruments and rush around the stage delighting in the sugar-rush punk of songs like 'Bad Neighbour' and 'Hair Is Everywhere'.

► **HEAR THEM** pams.bandcamp.com

► **SEE THEM LIVE** London Montague Arms (March 28)

Roman Charity

Dubliner Connor Walls retreated into his bedroom last year and started recording beautifully introverted "slow-fi" reminiscent of John Cale or Galaxie 500. His first two tunes as Roman Charity – 'Hangovers & Heartbeats' and 'Blue' – are packed with uplifting melodies and incisive, worldly observations.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/romancharity

► **HEAR HIM** romancharity.bandcamp.com

Eliza Rose

T Pain's distinctly unsubtle 'Up Down' doesn't easily lend itself to being remodelled as a sweet, summery song with jazzy instrumentation and delicate vibrato, but that's exactly what London newcomer

Radar NEWS ROUND UP

SOCIETY DEAL

Luv Luv Luv Records have signed London nu-soul outfit Society. With some highly cinematic compositions already to their name, the enigmatic band are an exciting new prospect for the east London label, who count Splashh, Only Real and The Garden among their recent successes.

BRAIDS GET HEAVY

Montreal trio Braids' new album 'Deep In The Iris' will be released on April 27 on Arbutus. The album was recorded at a series of mountain retreats in Arizona, Vermont, and upstate New York, and tackles some weighty subject matter: pornography, abuse and, on new track 'Miniskirt', slut-shaming.



Braids

Kid Wave



WONDER WAVE

Heavenly hopefuls Kid Wave have announced their debut album, 'Wonderlust', due for release on June 1. A single of the same name also drops on March 30, produced by Doves cohort Dan Austin. The band are also heading out on a UK tour, kicking off on March 5 at Brixton Windmill in London.

DUSTIN STRIKES AGAIN

Beach Fossils mainman Dustin Payseur has launched new label Bayonet Records alongside former Captured Tracks manager Katie Garcia. Head to NME.COM/newmusic now to hear a playlist curated by the duo, alongside some news on what they've got coming up.

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Codist

Eliza Rose has fashioned out of it as part of her debut release, 'The Moonshine EP'.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/elizarosemusic

► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/elizarosemusic

Codist

Lo-fi foursome Codist emerged from Glasgow last month, clutching their ragged debut EP 'Loverscruff' with its nagging hooks and sweetly intimidating vocals. Check out 'Melted Painting', where frontman Phil Ivers growls "You look like you want to pull out my tongue" over a Dinosaur Jr-ish melody.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/codistband

Radar LABEL OF THE WEEK

Terrible Records



► **FOUNDED** 2009 by Chris Taylor of Grizzly Bear and Ethan Silverman

► **BASED** New York and LA

► **KEY RELEASES** CANT/Arthur Russell split seven-inch (2009), Solange – 'Losing You' (2012), Sick Feeling – 'Suburban Myth' (2015)

► **RADAR SAYS** The US tastemakers are currently gearing up to release albums by Empress Of, Le1f, Regal Degal, Kirin J Callinan and Porches.

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/codist

Laura Groves

Perhaps best known as the singer in Nautic, Laura Groves has just finished touring with Elbow, and on her latest EP 'Committed Language' she sounds like a mixture of Kate Bush and PJ Harvey gone all woozy and electronic. Songs like 'Dream Story' epitomise her prodigious talent.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/lauragrovesmusic

► **HEAR HER** soundcloud.com/lauragrovesmusic

► **SEE HER LIVE** London St John On Bethnal Green (March 10)

Jarryd James

Brisbane's Jarryd James has just one song to his name – 'Do You Remember', with its silky falsetto vocals, pounding drums and plucked guitars – but he's already tipped as Australia's next big breakout star. It's more a case of when than if.

► **SOCIAL** twitter.com/jarrydjamess

► **HEAR HIM** soundcloud.com/jarrydjamess

Travel Check

This Parisian garage rock band might sound a bit like the Black Lips, but they also pay homage to the greats, with a clattering cover of The 13th Floor Elevators' 'You're Gonna Miss Me'. They released their '66\$' EP in January; lo-fi tracks like 'Druggie Daddy' are full of ramshackle guitars and snarling vocals.

► **SOCIAL** facebook.com/travelcheckparis

► **HEAR THEM** travelcheck.bandcamp.com

Them Are Us Too

The swirling guitars and angelic vocals on 'Us Now', the first track from these two Californian 21-year-olds, shows a clear Cocteau Twins influence, while the thumping drums echo The Jesus And Mary Chain. Forthcoming album 'Remain' could be something special.

► **HEAR THEM** soundcloud.com/themareus

NEW SOUNDS FROM WAY OUT

This week's columnist

JEHNNY

BETH

Savages



LA PLANETE SAUVAGE

Marie Fisker is a solo artist, a singer-songwriter from Copenhagen. I met her in Milan when she was performing with the Danish producer Anders Trentemøller as lead singer and second guitarist. She is a rare singer, one who can deliver emotional lines with great integrity. She performs with such precision and intensity that on several occasions I found myself shedding a tear just hearing her voice. Last November I happened to be in LA the day they played the Fonda theatre. She excelled in her performance of 'Gravity' and 'Come Undone' (two Trentemøller classics), transcending the melodies into a ball of fire. For her solo music, I recommend you watch the three songs she recorded live for the Danish Radio programme Monogram on her website (mariefisker.com).

I first heard about **ZZZ's** through Portishead and Beak's Geoff Barrow, who was raving about them and booked us on the same bill when Beak's curated the Sonic City festival in Belgium. A few months later, in January 2014, we invited them to support Savages in Osaka, where they are based. We were very impressed by the intensity of their show, a mix of avant-garde, punk and experimental music, so fierce and full of adrenalin. Later in the year we invited them to play the Pop Noire night in London. ZZZ's are Youkaku (guitar, vocals), Yukary (bass, vocals) and Lyn (drums), each of them a master of their art, using atonal sounds and repetition, preferring musical textures over melodies. My favourite song of theirs is '(A Man Looks Into) The Hole'. Hear them at zzzs.bandcamp.com.



"I shed a tear just listening to Marie Fisker's voice. She's so intense"

I discovered **Girl Band** through their video 'Lawman'. I really hated their name at first, but the video was good. It's in black and white, simple and direct, and reminded me of the first Savages video 'City's Full'. Like ZZZ's, they favour unconventional approaches to songwriting, but with a mix of genres adding a touch of modernity. At the beginning of the year they were scheduled for an American tour and we invited them to support Savages in NYC. Unfortunately their visas were not approved (which often happens with new bands) so the meeting never happened. They're scheduled to play in London soon so I'll make sure I'm there. In the meantime, you can watch their live performance filmed in Iceland for American radio station KEXP-FM on YouTube.

Next week: The Orwells' Mario Cuomo

"THE LAST TOUR WAS A FUCKING BREEZE COMPARED TO THIS ONE. THIS IS DIFFERENT"

Noel Gallagher has a second solo album to tour this year and "it's gonna be challenging". What comes more easily, as Tom Howard discovers, is taking potshots at Kanye West, Sam Smith and Bastille...

PHOTOS: SHAMIL TANNA

In the last month, Noel Gallagher has laid out plans to give his daughter "a list of people to insult" at Ed Sheeran's Wembley Stadium show in June, explained that he'd "rather drink petrol" than listen to an Alex Turner interview, said Mick Jagger "looks like a dick" when he plays guitar and opined that "Nigel Farage doesn't look capable of running a corner shop, far less a country".

Today – casual as you like, in an interview he's squeezing in before a High Flying Birds band practice – he says Sam Smith "just stands there like Boy George in a coma"; calls Kanye West "a fucking dumbass" for invading Beck's stage at the Grammys, and suggests he'd have "knocked him out" if the rapper had done the same thing to Oasis in the '90s; and tells a story about running away from a recording studio to avoid bumping into Courtney Love.

He's got an album and a tour to promote, and he's doing it the only way he knows how.

There's a grin on his face throughout. He's not remotely concerned about the idea that one day, maybe, someone will take offence and plot violent retribution. "What is there

to be offended about? I never say anything about their persona. I don't diss anybody's character. Alex Turner wouldn't be offended by that, why should he be? I guess he could be by the headlines, because they're like 'Noel Calls Queen A Cunt', but I was just talking about rock-star interviews in general. Alex is a fucking top dude in a top band, and a very attractive man. His interviews, on the other hand, are lacklustre. It's even worse for solo artists. But if someone says fucking 'Noel Gallagher's shit', they're not saying I'm shit; they're saying my music's shit. And you can't be a fan of everybody's music, can you? I stand by everything I've ever said. Apart from Damon [in 1996, Noel said he hoped the Blur singer and bandmate Alex James would 'catch Aids and die']. I'd have found that offensive."

Paul Kaye – creator of anarchic famous-in-the-mid-'90s red carpet interviewer Dennis Pennis – once said he knew the character had ➔



Noel Gallagher
photographed
in east London

to die when celebrities started asking to be 'done' on the carpet. Has he ever been asked to slag anyone off to raise their profile? "No, nor would I. I find it odd when bands say, 'It's such an honour to be a bunch of cunts.' I read something in a magazine where a guy from Bastille said that it was such a fantastic honour that I'd said in an interview that in the '90s I would've taken him out after one interview. I just thought, 'You fucking dick.'"

Dishing out verbals is a game the 47-year-old mastered a long time ago, of course. It guarantees headlines, album sales, pub chat for his fans. But not everything in his life is so certain. For the first time in a long time, Noel Gallagher is entering the unknown.

In February, at

the Tufnell Park Dome in north London, Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds played their first show for almost two years, debuting 'In The Heat Of The Moment', 'Riverman', 'Lock All The Doors', 'The Dying Of The Light' and 'Ballad Of The Mighty I' from new album 'Chasing Yesterday'. He has no idea how it went.

"I'd never played in a room that small, or square," he says. "So there was a certain roar to the sound. But I don't know whether I sang well or if we played well. All the new songs have proven very difficult. Usually instinct tells me whether it was great or not, and everyone tells you it was brilliant. But the last tour was an absolute breeze compared to this. This is different: the songs are more groove based; there's a lot more floaty fucking layers on them. None of them sounded great until the night before that gig."

The Tufnell Park show began a journey that'll take the HFBs to arenas in Belfast, Dublin, Nottingham, Glasgow and Manchester before festival headline slots at Calling, Latitude and T In The Park in July. He's back in the big league. "It's gonna be challenging," he says. "Last time it took me a year to get to arena level, so by the time we played to the masses it was fucking perfect. This time we're gonna play to a lot of people before we work that out. You never know until you get out there what's working, and what percentage of old and new you need."

A healthy smattering of 'old' will be the key to Noel headlining festivals. At Tufnell Park he played four Oasis tunes: '(It's Good) To Be Free', 'Fade Away', 'Diggy's Dinner' and 'Don't Look Back In Anger'. As the shows get bigger, he'll add in some Oasis songs he's never played as a solo artist. "I can't say what because that would spoil it for the fucking punter," he says. "Obviously I'll play the big one. I wouldn't

"THERE WAS
A CERTAIN ROAR
TO THE SOUND
IN A ROOM
THAT SMALL"

say it's obscure Oasis, but I can tell you the Americans are gonna go, 'What is this shit?' So I might have to tailor it. I could do a set of Oasis songs, but I don't really want to."

Why not? "Because it's not Oasis on the poster, you know. I like playing them, it's not like they weird me out or anything. I just don't want to do too many. I'll do enough to keep people happy. To keep me happy."

Keeping his public happy when onstage is one of a very small number of things Noel takes seriously about his life as a famous musician. Another is his time spent giving dynamite interviews. His abilities in front of a Dictaphone are so legendary that other rock stars ask him for tips. "Serge [from Kasabian] was like, 'How do you do it?' I was like, 'I don't know, it's just something in me.' I don't turn up having got my fucking hit list and go, 'OK, right, let's call Sheeran a cunt.' We start conversations and away they go. Sometimes in the '90s I did think, 'This interview's boring. I'm gonna fucking jazz it up, I'm gonna say the Royal Family should be... not killed, but seriously maimed.' Some interviews are fucking boring, basically."

Also in the "fucking boring" category: talking about his own music. "I don't have anything to say about the songs," he says.

What's the story?

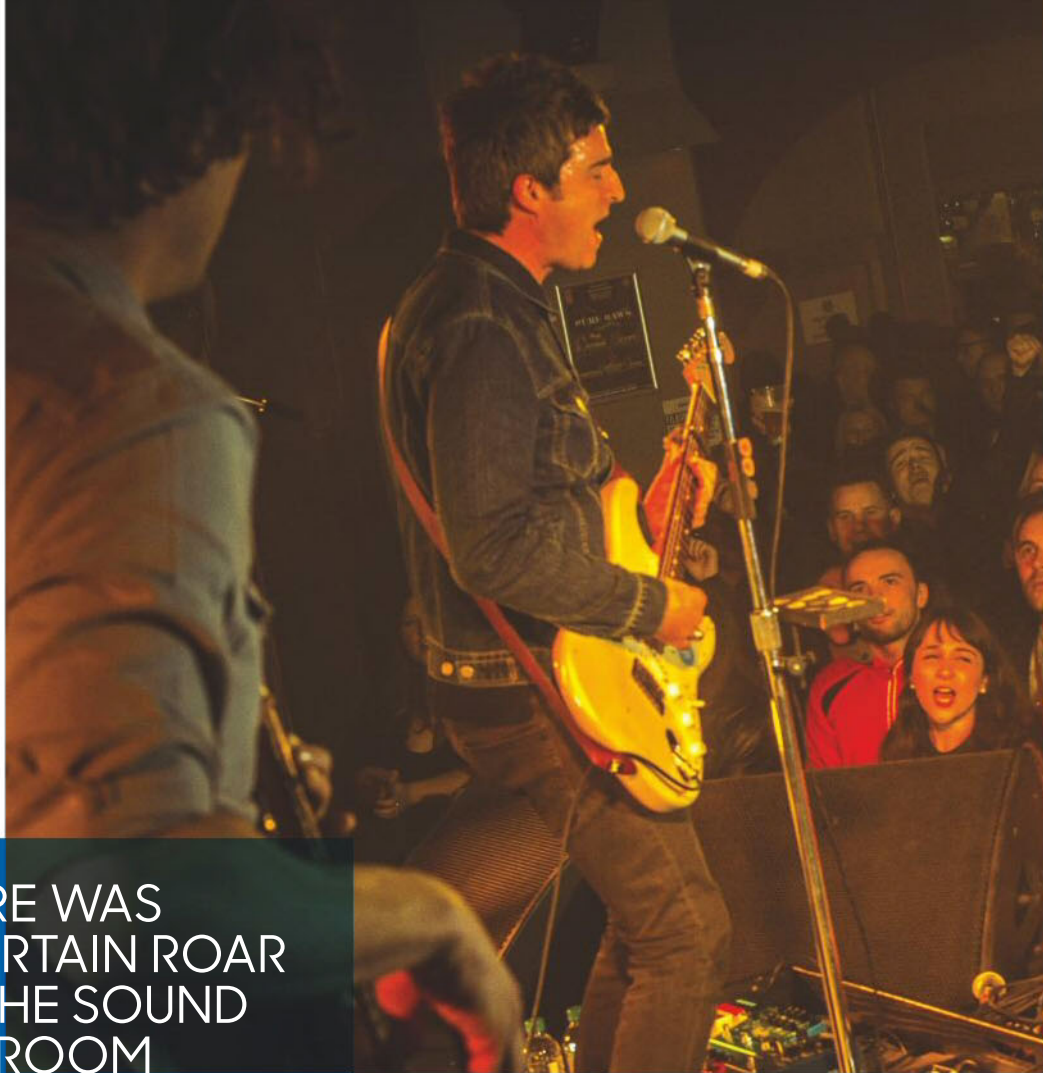
Six of the finest anecdotes from Noel's current repertoire

Morrissey

"I asked him: 'Before Johnny Marr knocked on your door that fateful day, were you writing songs?' And he said, 'Yes, of course.' And I said, 'But you've got such a unique way with melody – what were you writing? How?' And he said, 'Oh, I had a little drumkit at home.' And I went, 'What for?' And he said, 'Rice Krispies asked me to write them a jingle. I wouldn't do it, of course... I wouldn't wear the leather.' You think he's being serious but he's taking the piss. He's utterly brilliant."

John Squire

"If Oasis ever wanted a guest it was always down to me to ask... because if Liam's asking it sounds like, 'You gonna fucking play with us or what, you cunt?' So I'd only ask people who I like. Anyway, when John Squire came on at Knebworth [to play 'Champagne Supernova'] he had flu, so stayed in the tour bus all weekend. He's an enigma, and just kind of floated on, did his thing and came off again. I don't think he'd ever played that loud live. He brought this little amp with him, and when he came onstage he just stood here, turned to me and went: 'Fucking hell!'"





"I'LL PLAY ENOUGH OASIS SONGS TO KEEP PEOPLE HAPPY"

Launching 'Chasing Yesterday' at The Dome in north London, February 2, 2015

"They just arrive. My songs aren't meant to be taken literally, and all the characters that appear in them are all just fucking symbolism. I don't sit down and write songs, they write themselves, they're an accident. I stumble on an idea, develop it, and a song appears. Anyone could write my songs. There's that pretentiousness that's, you know, 'when I wrote this it was a Tuesday afternoon and the birds were singing' and I just don't giving a fucking toss."

Fame – the awards ceremonies, the appearances on *Match Of The Day*, the nights out at London celeb restaurant Chiltern Firehouse – is dismissed as "nonsense", and "should be treated with a healthy dose of

contempt and 50 per cent 'fuck it'." The grin on his face returns. "The entire thing is utterly ridiculous. Look at this, right now. I'm sitting in a fucking room talking about Kanye West, who I have no interest in, and we both know it's going to end up on the cover of a fucking national magazine. It's ridiculous. When I get out of bed in the morning, it's ridiculous for every black-cab driver to know exactly who you are and the football team you support."

He continues: "In the '90s I'd go out for cigs at nine o'clock in the morning – one of Primal Scream's passed out in the kitchen, another one's in the back garden dancing to The Stooges – and I'd open the door and there'd be 25 Japanese people there, waving. Now, no-one bugs me, but people come up and just go, 'Can I touch you?' And you just go, 'Well, of course you can, yes.' And they go, 'Can I shake your hand?' and I'm like, 'Well, which one do you wanna shake? Because to be quite honest that's a good one (*points to right hand*), but that's a fucking belter too (*points to left*), so which one do you wanna shake? But they're not hounding me because of me. They like my former band, and I fucking get that, because there's no bigger Smiths or Jam or Stone Roses fan than me."

Stops. Thinks. "I'll tell you the biggest farce. I was at the Baftas the other night, and I was walking up the red carpet and all the press were going, 'Liam! Liam! This way, Liam!' If that doesn't sum it up, what the fuck does?"

Does it upset you, people thinking you're Liam? "I'll tell you who it does upset: Liam."

When he gets it right, things Noel says ripple through popular culture. He first brought up his concerns about a lack of "working-class rage" in bands and the charts on BBC Radio 4 last December. It's still rumbling on. Recently he was asked to write something for a piece about the issue in the current-affairs magazine *New Statesman* – Johnny Marr, BBC Radio 6 DJ and ex-NME writer Stuart Maconie and The Slits' Viv Albertine all did – but he "couldn't be arsed" to answer the question: are there too many posh people in the arts? His answer is "no". He elaborates: "But there doesn't seem to be enough of a working-class voice in there. ➔

Kanye West

"I read in the papers this morning that he got onstage at the Grammys, saying to Beck, 'You should respect artistry and give Beyoncé that award.' That cunt needs to look up the description of the word 'artistry'. If Beck, the player of 14 instruments, is not an artist, then fuck me. Kanye's a fucking dumbass. His interview with Zane Lowe a few years ago was fucking priceless, but he does have this thing where he thinks he runs the music business. Imagine if he'd got up at the Brits in the '90s. I'd have knocked him out."



Liam Gallagher

"He's had some bizarre looks, but the best thing about Liam is he truly doesn't give a fuck. We used to walk into rehearsals and we'd look at him and be like, 'Oh my god, wow, OK, OK, alright, OK, that's bizarre', but yeah he's had some cracking hairstyles. Saying that, though, I've had the same hairstyle since 1994. At least the lad's pushing it forward. He's got a beard at the moment? I often blame that beard for us not really cracking America..."

Courtney Love



"I read an interview with her once and she said, 'I can't fucking believe this. I know everyone in London and I've fucking never met Noel – was he hiding from me?' And the answer is: yes. I was in a studio in LA and we were in the back recording 'Don't Believe The Truth'. And reception called us and said, 'Just to warn you: Courtney Love's just walked in.' I knew Liam was running around in reception and I thought, 'Brilliant, that's a fucking meeting of minds right there.' I could hear her shouting, 'Where's Noel? I gotta meet Noel!' So I grabbed a cig, exited out the back door and went straight back to the motel and locked the door. I was like, 'I can't be dealing with her rowdiness – fucking hell, no way'. But I applaud her."

Richard Ashcroft

"I haven't seen Richard for ages, but whatever he's doing I hope he's making a record. I don't know anyone who's got his phone number. The one he gave me he never answers. He lives in a fucking big stately home and I imagine he's just stoned, thinking, 'What is that fucking noise?' That United Nations Of Sound record was a fucking great record. I should make a record with him. Would that upset Liam? Oh, that would be war. The fact that you've now put that in my head means I'm definitely going to follow that through. Hopefully he might give himself a black eye."



How many posh people own art galleries? Not many whose dad was a fucking miner, I'll tell you that. But the chart thing isn't Mumford & Sons', or whoever's, fault, you know? If there's not enough of a voice of the working class in the Top 40, that's because of the fucking record labels, who bought out the little indie labels. Why would you buy Creation Records just to shut it down? Why would you do that?"

Is it not Oasis' fault, for showing the big labels how much money it was possible to make? "It wasn't our fault, because I wasn't representing anyone other than me and our kid and the band we were in. But after we became so big, everybody thought there was a science to it, but actually it was because of the fucking singer and the songs, and magic. We definitely killed indie music, for sure. But was it our fault? No, was it fuck."

You've got to wonder, though: can someone who's sold 60 million records still identify as working class? "In there (*points to heart*), of course. I still know what it's like, regardless of my circumstances, which are clearly not fucking working class – I don't have to work for a living and I don't work for somebody else. But I remember what it's like and I won't justify my upbringing to please anybody. I remember the fucking seven years on the dole, and I remember signing on with my dad and my two mates and their dad. My credentials are impeccable. But luckily for me I had an extraordinary talent, which was to appropriate other people's middle eights and make entire albums out of them, and that made me shitloads of money. For that I apologise, but that's the way it is."

Are you ever concerned about the luxuries that will come to your kids? "No, I think, 'You fucking lucky bastards,' and 'Good for you', you know. Good for you that you don't have to go to fucking school and come home talking like fucking Ali G, because, believe me, I would beat that out of you. Clearly my life would be vastly different if my dad was a fucking rock star. But I have to think that I would have made something of my life independent of my family's wealth or fame

Noel's new favourite band

Samuel T Herring on Future Islands supporting Noel at his Teenage Cancer Trust show



"We heard that Noel had personally asked for us to open up the show. That in itself had us really excited, but to get the chance to play at the Royal Albert Hall and for such a good cause, we feel very fortunate to be asked. We were really surprised to get the offer and excited at the chance of meeting and supporting him."



"IT'S RIDICULOUS FOR EVERY CAB DRIVER TO KNOW WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT TEAM YOU SUPPORT"

or whatever. Will my kids know what it's like to never have wallpaper on the walls? No. And good for them. It's not their fault. It's like the Royal Family. You can't have anything against them as people, because they're born into it. What people don't like about the Royal Family is the institution of monarchy, and that we're supposed to be subjects of theirs. Obviously the Queen is a very nice lady, but none of us buy into that shit. But they've not asked to be born into it, they're just the fucking lucky ones, d'you know what I mean? Good for them. I've met some of them. I was indifferent."

You need to be a showman, not royalty, to intimidate Noel. "I was intimidated by John Lydon initially. Because you really don't know what the fuck he's gonna be like... But then you realise he's brilliant and think, 'Now I can take the piss!' Weller, initially, because he's got fucking attitude. Neil Young because he's a proper fucking legend. And strangely enough, Billy Connolly, who I met in Harrods. I was actually gonna see him live that night, and I told him and he just went, (*Scottish accent*) 'Here, ma wee brother', and it was great because I fucking love Billy Connolly and he could easily have been a cunt. Turns out he's a fucking extremely nice guy. Oh, and Iggy Pop. He hit me round the head with a chair one night. Accidentally, of course. We were at a gig somewhere at the Cannes Film Festival. And he was doing some afterparty and we sat right at the very front of the fucking stage and he started swinging a chair round and one of the legs caught me round the back of the head. I just thought, 'I'll give him that, because he was in The Stooges.' Morrissey can be intimidating because he's clearly the most intelligent fucking man ever. And very cutting. And clearly the minute you go to the toilet he's slagging you off."

A musical commitment Noel gleefully talks about comes on Saturday, March 28, when he plays the Royal Albert Hall for a Teenage Cancer Trust show. He's been involved with TCT since its first year, 2000, when he played with The Who "and got to meet the kids and the people who run it. It gets under your skin. I like it because it's a charity for British kids, and it's real, you know. And tied into all that are selfish reasons, because I fucking love playing the Albert Hall. It's just all good."

He's played it numerous times since 2000, and released the album 'The Dreams We Have As Children - Live At The Royal Albert Hall' in 2009 to raise money for the charity. In 2013, he curated the whole thing when Roger Daltrey took some time off, putting in calls to Coldplay, Kevin Rowland, Mumford & Sons

and Ed Sheeran. "You'll be there on the phone listening to someone blatantly lying to you. People say they can do it and then get their publicist to call up later and say, 'Oh, we can't do it now, he thinks his cat's gonna have a stroke that particular afternoon.' You're there, cajoling, with some cunt who plays a banjo about whether they're gonna turn up."

"The only one fucking person that has ever, ever, ever said, 'I can't do it. I just got back from Australia and I can't be fucking arsed, man. I'm fucked, but I will definitely do it next year' - and I crossed his name off the list - was Ed Sheeran! He actually called me back and said, 'Right, I'm ready now, I wanna do it', and I thought, 'You know what, what a fucking dude.' But to make the begging phone calls is out of character for me, and I've seen a side to myself I don't like. I was thinking, 'Well, I'll just sell out all seven nights, fuck these idiots.'"

This year he's handpicked Baltimore synthpop band Future Islands to support him. "And I'll tell you why. When we all saw that thing on [*The Late Show With*] David Letterman I was like, 'Fuck me, that's just amazing!' When it finishes, Letterman shouts, 'Yeah, c'mon!' - that was exactly how I felt. Like, fucking... *what was that?!* When they played London I couldn't go, so I thought if I can't go to one of their gigs I'll get them to one of mine. Luckily they were available."

And thinking about the Albert Hall show returns his mind to the aspects of life as a famous musician that are not, as previously discussed, farcical. "When I'm onstage, that's not a farce. Although, even onstage, it can be - when loads of people young enough to be your children are going, 'Say something

funny', and I'm all, 'No, I'd rather not', and they're like, 'That's funny!' But creating songs, that's not a farce. You're putting that shit into people's lives. I love what I do. And I love music! It's one of the great things about this shitty little country in which we live." And off goes Noel Gallagher to band practice. ■

The fab four

Noel ranks the best albums written by Noel

1. 'Definitely Maybe'



"This sits fucking colossally at number one because of the impact it had, and the ripples continue all the way to Francis Bean Cobain's fucking iPad. You can't beat it. It was Oasis at its most pure. It was the original line-up. Me and Mark Coyle produced it. It was fucking great."

2. '(What's The Story) Morning Glory?'



"Because that fucking made me a multimillionaire."

3. 'Noel Gallagher's High Flying Birds'



"It's got better songs on it than 'Standing On The Shoulder Of Giants' and fucking 'Heathen Chemistry', plus it will always be wrapped up in great memories for me. It was a moment in time. When I came to rehearsing for this tour I had to go back and listen to it and I got upset, thinking, 'Fucking hell, it's a really good record.' In my canon it's fucking right up there."

TBC. 'Chasing Yesterday'



"I don't know. I won't get a handle on this until I've done the tour."

The real Deal

Almost two years after Kim Deal quit the Pixies, no-one's any the wiser as to why she walked out. But when there's a new Breeders record and a series of seven-inches from Deal on the horizon, why dwell on the past? She tells Emily Mackay about the art of keeping it cottage industry



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A few days after I speak to Kim Deal, I get an envelope in the post. From Kim Deal. It's full of seven-inch singles. From Kim Deal. Not from Kim Deal's PR, manager or agent, but addressed from Kim Deal, Dayton, Ohio. This is how the alternative-rock darling of the 1990s rolls nowadays. In June 2013, she left the Pixies some nine years after they first got back together. The band's reunion had become, relative to their success in any lifetime, a very big deal, and interest in any new material was intense. Kim had in fact written the first new Pixies song, 'Bam Thwok', in 2004, but just before they began working on their fifth album 'Indie Cindy', she bowed out, without offering any explanation. Now she's happy to be keeping it cottage industry with her solo seven-inch series.

"There's a lot of work in it," says Deal. "Getting people together in the same room to play a song. Like [Slint drummer] Britt Walford, he's coming up again in a week to play the drums on the next solo A-side... We're doing it ourselves, and we don't have a team of people making the product, and there's not a perfume coming with it. It's not a lifestyle brand. So even though it reads as low-key, it's really actually just regular. We're just like anybody who is in a band who plays music →

with people and then they go and record it and they put it out.”

She's been putting out these records independently since January 2013, paying for the recording and pressing herself. In the case of 'The Root', she even made the video herself, in the car park of her local grocery store, singing the lyrics into the reversing camera of her friend's car.

“...And I'm kneeling behind the car, singing along to the track, singing really loud,” Kim recalls enthusiastically. (Everything Kim says is enthused, even when she says that in Dayton “it's grey, and winter's coming, and it's just shitty”.) “The people from the grocery store came out and were like, ‘Are you OK?’”

You can see, I tell her, why they'd be concerned about a woman apparently serenading an exhaust pipe.

“Oh yes.”

But Kim Deal really is OK. She's chirpy, warm and curious, asking almost as many questions as she answers. There's still been

"My dad wants me to kill him when he gets too old. I'd do it, but it's illegal"

Kim Deal

no word from her, though, about why she left the Pixies. When she announced her departure, the band said her place would always be open. In a subsequent interview with *The Guardian*, Black Francis claimed she had in fact offered to play for the band again, but just not in a firm enough way that they'd been confident to accept. “She's been reticent for a very long time to make a new [Pixies] record,” he said. “She was unhappy with the situation, or unhappy with her life or whatever, just not happy.” Kim has politely but firmly declined to comment in her rare interviews since then, and indeed, does not fall for my cunning ‘perhaps you'd like to put your side of the story?’ tactic either, responding with a warm, “I'm *gooooood*, thank you,” and nearly hanging up in the politest, most Kim Deal way possible: “It was really nice talking to you, though!”

Kim's twin sister Kelley, her lifelong musical sounding board and collaborator in Kim's other '90s-shaping band, The Breeders (always the Pixies' cooler sisters, knocking out weird, haunting, fun and oddly intimate indie-pop classics in their own idiosyncratic way), has revealed a sliver more, telling one website that she didn't think Kim left the Pixies to focus on The Breeders, but that she thought it “was just one of those things where people grew apart. I think they wanted different things from music, y'know?”

In the absence of any word from Kim, there's little point in speculating. And why worry? We now have new Breeders material on the way from the line-up that recorded their 1993 classic 'Last Splash' and reunited to tour the album on its 20th anniversary (backed with a mouth-watering reissue, 'LSXX'), as well as the seven-inches, a gift in themselves. Kim is still pondering whether to collect them all into an album or boxset, but she doesn't want to make people buy them again. “I dunno. Do you have any suggestions? Seriously.”

You get the impression that not really having any fixed plans, schedules or firm commitments is something that suits Kim just fine. At the moment, she's unsigned, and is putting the seven-inches out through Kim Deal Music. She's become one of those artists, like Thom Yorke, who, with an established reputation and enough money to pay for recording, can exist in their own little world alongside an industry struggling to find the best way forward.

Of course, a new Breeders album is not the same as a solo seven-inch, and might entail a return to 4AD to follow the reissue of 'Last Splash'. Revisiting that album is what's made a new one possible, says Kim. While Kelley and British bassist Josephine Wiggs have been a constant “good, funny, eccentric” presence in her life, prior to the reunion, she and drummer Jim Macpherson had been estranged since 1995, when they recorded the album 'Pacer' with their side-project The Amps' album. “We were drinking a lot, and I think he got mad at me,” she recalls. (She nixed her alcohol and drug addictions with a 2002 spell in rehab.)



“And then he left my basement and took his drums and I never saw him again. *E-ver*. And it hurt my heart, 'cos he's such a great guy and I felt dumb and I'm sure he did too – whatever, we don't even know. So Kelley said, ‘Hey, y'know, next year is the 20th. Should we do some shows – do you think they would be into it?’ And it's like, ‘I'll text Josephine, you ask Jim.’ So Josephine said, ‘Yeah, sounds fucking fun,’ and Jim said, ‘Yeah, I'd love to do it.’ It's like, ‘Oh, thank god!’”

Past splash

The life and times of Kim Deal

January 1986

Joins the Pixies, responding to Black Francis and Joey Santiago's classified ad for a female bassist into both Hüsker Dü and Peter, Paul And Mary. Turns up to the audition with no bass because she's never played one. Joins anyway.

March 1988

The Pixies' first full-length album, 'Surfer

Rosa', is released. It includes 'Gigantic', co-penned by Kim and a huge fan favourite.

April 1989

'Doolittle' is released, and tensions begin to grow between Black Francis and Deal (he threw a guitar at her during a German gig), because Deal wants to explore more of her own songs within the Pixies, according to Joey

Santiago. The band go on hiatus and Kim forms The Breeders with Throwing Muses' Tanya Donelly.

December 1989

The Breeders record 'Pod' in Edinburgh; when Kim returns to the US, she learns that she has been fired from the Pixies.

May 1990

'Pod' is released. The Pixies regroup.



with Kim now back in the band, and release 'Bossanova' that August.

September 1991

With Kim's role heavily reduced, Pixies release 'Trompe Le Monde', the final album of their initial incarnation.

January 1993

Black Francis announces, on BBC Radio 5 Live, that Pixies have split up. He hasn't told the rest of the band, but later informs them by fax.

August 1993

The Breeders release second album 'Last



The Breeders in 1994: (l-r) Kim Macpherson, Kim and Kelley Deal, Josephine Wiggs

They're working towards a new album "if we can get the songs together", says Kim, raving about the first two songs, provisionally titled 'All Nerve' and 'Skinhead #2', which they recorded with Steve Albini at his Electrical Audio studio in Chicago. (Albini recorded The Breeders' 1990 debut, 'Pod', with the band's first line-up – Kim, Wiggs, Britt Walford and Tanya Donnelly of Throwing Muses/Belly – and regarded it as the best sound and performance he ever got from a band.) Beyond that, The

Breeders have been doing one of her solo songs, 'Walking With A Killer', live, and she has a couple more. Although "Josephine doesn't like one of them. Kelley actually doesn't really like that one either... I don't know."

Clearly The Breeders are going to be working at their own pace, resolutely live and on tape as ever – Deal's always been a studio scholar, proud of making her own cables, though unlike many fans of keeping it real, she retains a sense of humour about it. "You know what, I really like analogue. And at times I'll be down in the basement, just like, 'Fuck it, let's just go fucking digital, fuck this, man...'"

In the meantime,

Kim's close to completing her sixth solo seven-inch – the B-side was also recorded with Albini, and the A-side is already written, she says. "It's so romantic and so sweet. Hopefully it'll be this year sometime. Right now it's called 'Nobody Loves You More'. See how sweet that is, right? I know. Love in the title. I'm calling it that now – maybe it'll gross me out and I'll change my mind."

All of the solo singles have a personal, intimate nature. 'Biker Gone' is about being "disillusioned with life", 'Range On Castle' recounts a date she had at the Miami Valley

Shooting Grounds, and 'Beautiful Moon' was "inspired by an incredibly annoying nightingale in California". The eerie, tense 'Walking With A Killer' "stemmed from being in high school and walking from my house to the store and fucking assholes yelling out the window, 'RAPE VICTIM!' It was fucking raw around here. I think it's 'cos there's Wright-Patterson Air Force base, a military base and shit... Dudes can really be not very cool sometimes. You know what I always used to hate, was 'Smile!' 'SMILE!' Fucking guys telling me to fucking smile. Fucking assholes. Like I have to have a good day to put a little light in their life. 'Come on, girl, give me a smile!' Fuuuuuck yooooouuu."

Kim's still at home in Dayton, where she lives with her parents. Her mother suffers from Alzheimer's, something that the third single in her series, 'Are You Mine?', reflects on in an oblique, beautiful way. "She would just walk about the house saying, 'Are you mine?' Now she doesn't even say that any more. She doesn't, y'know, talk. But at the time she was still

struggling with some thoughts and... it was more than I was familiar – she thought maybe I was her baby. Y'know, like, are you *mine*? And I thought, 'God, that's so fucking adorable, man.' Yeah, it was just like, 'Yeah, I'm yours, mama.' Oh good lord, it was so sweet. But now she doesn't say that any more."

It sounds incredibly hard to deal with. "Yeah. Yeah. My dad just now said to me today, 'I really miss your mom.' And of course, she's alive, sitting in a room next door. It's sad."

Her father also inspired a track, in perhaps a slightly less conventionally sweet way. The vamping 'Hot Shot' – with its references to deadly nightshade and a witch's hat – comes from a strange sense of daughterly duty. "My dad wants me to kill him. When he gets too old, kill him. He said, 'Gimme a Hot Shot [a strychnine-based poison]. I want you to kill me.' I told him I'd do it, but it's illegal, y'know." She hisses conspiratorially. "And frankly, I think now he's changed his mind. So could you imagine me doing it, 'cos I really thought he meant it? But now it's been a couple of years, and it's like, 'No, I'm good now, Kimmeh.'"

Sure, she finds it upsetting when her parents joke and talk about their death, "but I've lived with them since 2003," she says. "So sometimes I'm like, 'Listen, old man, I don't care if you want me to kill you; I'm gonna kill you right now.'"

She laughs. She is joking. But still... I'm definitely not going to try and ask her anything else about what happened with the Pixies. ■



The original Pixies line-up, 1989



Splash', which becomes more successful than any Pixies album thanks to the huge crossover success of single 'Cannonball', with its video directed by Sonic Youth's Kim Gordon and director Spike Jonze.

Late 1994

Kelley Deal is arrested on drug charges and goes into rehab, putting The Breeders on hiatus.

October 1995

Kim's new band, The Amps, release their sole album, 'Pacer'.

May 2002

A new line-up of The Breeders, featuring bassist Mando Lopez, drummer Jose Mendez and guitarist Richard Presley, record a new album, 'Title TK', with Steve Albini.

February 2004

After tentative rehearsals together, Pixies announce their reformation and a tour.

June 2004

The band release a new song, 'Bam

Thwok', written by Deal.

2006

loudQUIETloud: A Film About The Pixies is released. It demonstrates the full extent of Kim and Black Francis' toxic relationship.



Deal with Pixies at Coachella, May 2004

April 2008

The Breeders release fourth album 'Mountain Battles'.

May 2009

The Breeders curate the All Tomorrow's Parties festival in the UK and release an EP, 'Fate To Fatal'.

January 2013

Kim Deal launches her seven-inch solo series. She also announces the reformation of the mid-'90s line-up of The Breeders to perform 'Last Splash' on its 20th anniversary.

June 2014

Deal leaves Pixies.

THE (OTHER)



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Will Butler's
self-portrait,
taken in Montreal

BUTLER DID IT

After putting songwriting on hold to become Arcade Fire's hyperactive sideman, Will Butler has returned to his all-American roots for his long-in-the-making debut solo album. Hazel Sheffield finds him confronting God, money and death on 'Policy'

When Will Butler was a poetry student at Northwestern University in Illinois at the turn of the millennium, he used to liven up gigs with his covers band, Citizens On Patrol, by pretending to be inside a whale and sliding off the stage into the audience on his back. But when his elder brother Win snatched him away to join Arcade Fire, things went south for the other band. "Will Butler has penned five songs but he is busy touring with The Arcade Fire, so the chances of COP getting together to record is low," read a sad message on COP's website. As it turned out, the chances of getting Will Butler to record any of his own songs would be nil for another decade. Call it an occupational hazard of being recruited to join the biggest Canadian act since Neil Young when you've not even finished your degree.

Fifteen years later, Will has finally got around to recording some of his own songs, his debut solo album slicing a blade through the breastbone of modern America to reveal a rotten heart squirting fake blood. The cabaret of characters Will presents on 'Policy' have been coming into focus for years: in half-asleep imaginings on long flights, in the bottom of tea

cups emptied in the dead of night, on scraps of paper tucked away for later.

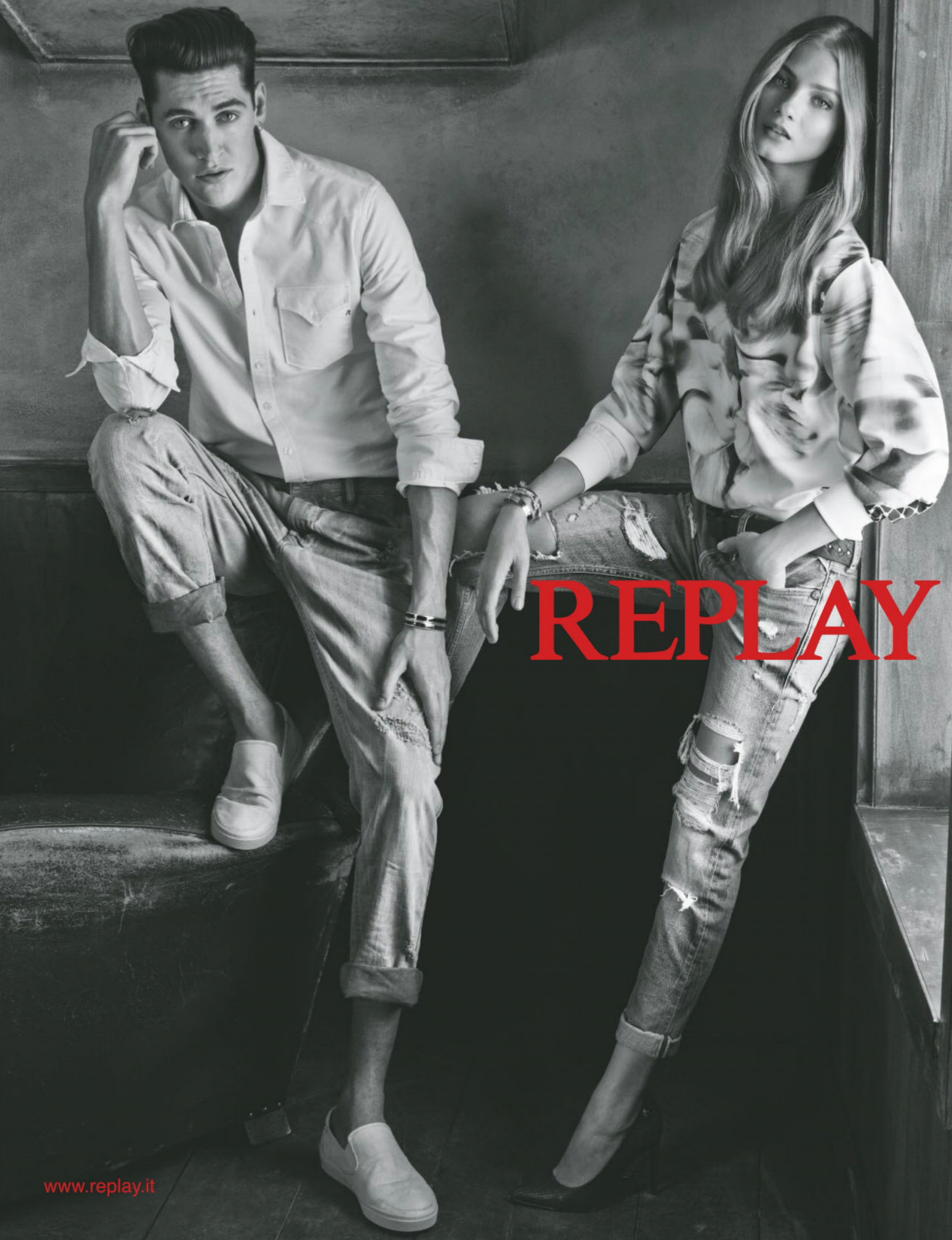
One song depicts a man bargaining with his maker ('Son Of God'); another imagines God himself with his feet up while the end of the world approaches ('Something's Coming'). One tells the story of a woman called Anna, wasting her days working for money she doesn't have time to spend. Will based the character on Anita in *West Side Story*, who sings of her love of America in the song of the same name.

"There are a couple of slapstick moments on 'Policy' that you don't find in Arcade Fire," Will explains. "To me, slapstick is primal. Kids and adults both laugh at it. American cinema is founded on slapstick: Charlie Chaplin falling into a hole with his pants down, or the saucerpan handle crashing onto someone's head in *Looney Tunes*." He titled the album 'Policy' to link each of the songs to his vision of America, where his musical roots run deep.

Will was born in the mountains of Northern California to Utah Mormons on his mother's side and New England pilgrims on his father's side. The family moved to the outskirts of Houston, Texas when Will was two for his father's job as a geologist for an oil corporation. The suburbs, later chronicled in Arcade Fire's album of the same name, were comfortable but dull.

Win and Will amused themselves with the musical instruments their family had inherited. Their grandfather Alvino Rey (the spit of Win) was a banjo player who grew up in Cleveland and invented the first electric guitar for Gibson by adding bits to a steel guitar. He married Luise King, one of the King Sisters, a big band-era vocal group from a Mormon family in Utah. "Religion is one of the only ways I know how to relate to music," Will says. "God in music is as important as any other element. It's like the Johnny Cash album 'Love God Murder' [a boxset from 2000]. Although I have less experience of murder."

At 15, Will went to join his brother at the prestigious Phillips Exeter boarding school in New Hampshire. Win went on to McGill University in Montreal, but Will stayed in the US to study at Northwestern University near Chicago, which he chose partly for its theatre scene. He worked on the college radio station, picking playlists from stacks of vinyl comprising original ESG and Liquid Liquid albums, world music reissues, and new ➔



REPLAY

Will Butler and
Richard Reed Parry
during Arcade Fire's
Glastonbury 2014 set

labels like DFA. In the days, he would prepare notes for "very nerdy and deep" lectures on anything from American minimalism to Flying Nun, the cult New Zealand record label. Or he'd write poetry, in which he majored with a collection of sea shanties inspired by his paternal grandfather's work as a boat builder.

In an early Arcade Fire song, 'Vampire/Forest Fire', Win poked fun at Will's poetry. In another, 'William Pierce', he apologised for being mean "like our dad" and implored Will to make his own way through life. "Don't follow me", Win sang. The reality was somewhat different. Will's studies were frequently interrupted by calls from Win to join Arcade Fire on tour.

The band recorded 'Funeral' when Will was in his senior year and hit the road as soon as he had slipped off his graduation gown. Win loved Will for his energy on stage (see sidebar), while other members saw him as the glue, making sure everyone got heard. "You can trust Will," says Arcade Fire guitarist Tim Kingsbury. "Even though I believe it was him who came up with the motto 'never trust anyone!'"

From then on, Arcade Fire kept up a punishing schedule, continually touring their award-winning albums. They learned tricks to make their jobs easier on the way – on the 'Reflektor' tour there was even a baby bus for Win and Régine's son and their tour manager's infant daughter. "In Arcade Fire, it's always been 'give me 115 per cent until you're nearly dead'. We've only recently got our rhythm right so between touring you have energy for something other than sitting at home drinking warm broth," Will explains.

Win and Régine learned they were having a baby at the same time as 'Reflektor' was being mastered in early autumn 2013. They were halfway through composing the score for the Spike Jonze film *Her*, a project they became involved in while housesitting for Spike in New York (he was in Shanghai, shooting the futuristic skyline that appears in the movie). Time was running out, so Will jumped in to try and finish the soundtrack for them.

Will said he spent a lot of time learning Spike's language – if something was "too happy" it might mean "too many drums", for example – and translating that for fellow collaborator Owen Pallett, a Domino signee who has also worked with acts as varied as The



BROTHERLY LOVE

Win Butler on Will's...



...playing style

"Will responds to energy; he's not afraid to do something

that will change the direction of a song, and that's all rock'n'roll has going for it."

...role in Arcade Fire

"The strength of our band is that everyone is the front-person of another band. Until we were in this band together we were always doing our separate projects. I've always known him as a front-person and as a writer."

...debut solo album

"It's very much a rock'n'roll record in the Jerry Lee Lewis tradition. The songs are in this realm in-between serious and poetic and funny and absurd."

National, Alex Turner on his *Submarine* soundtrack and Taylor Swift – who he described as a technical and emotional genius. "Translating between Owen and Spike really broke my brain," he says.

If Will struggled, Spike didn't notice. "When things are at their most high stress – final hour, under deadline – he never cracks," Spike tells *NME*. "Will is that rare artist that's very sensitive and attuned to what something should be emotionally, but also very calm and rational and easy to direct and collaborate with."

The final soundtrack got a nod for Best Original Score at last year's Oscars, which convinced Will to get on with recording his own music. "It was kind of forced on me because I got the Oscar nomination even though that was none of my music," Will says. He squeezed in a week at Electric Lady Studios, Jimi Hendrix's old living room-turned-studio in New York, in a mid-tour break in May. Not long after, the album was in the post to Win.

"I've been playing it a lot, actually," Win says. "It's interesting to hear the lyrics, because I haven't heard lyrics he's written for a long time. They're in this realm in-between serious and poetic and funny and absurd – like *Annie Hall*, or *The Simpsons*. We used to watch a lot of *The Simpsons* as kids – a pop show that had a lot of deep literary references and sarcasm."

Solo work meant Will could keep things really simple, for once. "When

I've seen him perform, he has this little tiny guitar amp and a guitar and he can just plug in and play," Win says. "I can definitely see the appeal."

"It's hard to do something that bare with Arcade Fire," says Will. "It's hard when you have that many people around not to use them." 'Policy' is deliberately stripped back to guitar and drums. The horns and female vocal harmonies, supplied by Will's wife and friends, hark back to the big band of his ancestors, while the synths that appear on 'Anna' are a reminder of his work on Arcade Fire tracks like 'Sprawl II'.

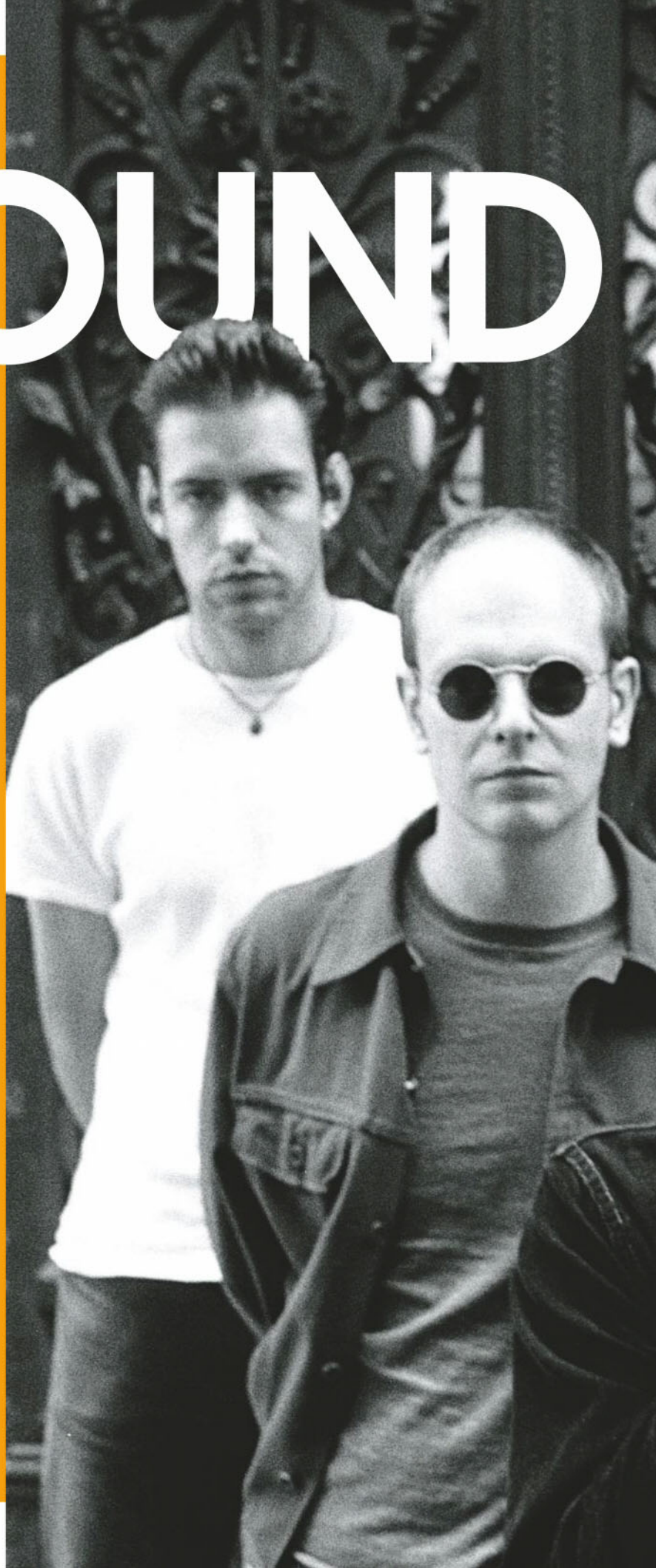
He talks about finding inspiration in the "raw and in-the-room" albums John Lennon put out when he first went solo, when he was an immigrant in New York, the "assertive comedy and mindless violence" of Ghostface Killah, and the Violent Femmes, "where there is pure id". Improbably, 15 years after his college stage show high jinks, he's also still invoking whales: "To me 'Policy' is like the world of *Moby-Dick* – you think of it as a serious work of American literature, but it starts off with jokes about whale penis," he says. 'Policy' is Will's attempt to lampoon America's obsession with God and money and death without scaring away an audience he hasn't met yet. "America is my heritage," he says. "America is all I know." ■

"'POLICY' HAS SOME MOMENTS OF SLAPSTICK"

WILL BUTLER

AROUND

Twenty years on, 'The Bends' is regarded as Radiohead's first great album: a nuanced, searing indictment of capitalism *and* cynicism. But as Jazz Monroe discovers, a toxic fug of label pressure, frustrating sessions and their struggles with fame made its release some kind of miracle



THE BEND



M

arch 1993, Ben Gurion Airport, Tel Aviv. Rolling onto the warm tarmac is a studious posse of musical oddballs, most of whom have never left the UK, let alone Europe. A month after the low-key release of their debut album, 'Pablo Honey', instead of the ripple of curiosity they'd anticipated, Israel goes nuts. At customs, officials request an a capella rendition of 'Creep' – their debut single, released to zero fanfare in the UK the previous September. As label reps shuttle the shell-shocked Brits between commitments, fans mob the EMI convoy and attempt to rip clumps from Thom Yorke's hair.

A week later, Radiohead readjust to stuffy Oxfordshire, wondering what just happened. It transpires that 'Creep' had a supernova effect on Israeli army radio station, Galei Tzahal. DJ Yoav Kutner, Israel's answer to John Peel, would blast it three times an hour, sparking a Middle Eastern rivalry between the Oxford five-piece and Britpop fops Suede. "In England it was Oasis vs Blur," remembers Uzi Preuss, then head of EMI Israel. "In Israel it was Radiohead vs Suede." The press earned Radiohead three headline shows, plus a primetime spot on the country's only TV channel, miming 'Creep' on Israel's version of *Blue Peter*. Flying home seemed a grim prospect. "It was like Cinderella, you know?" says Uzi. "The clock reaches midnight and they're back to being anonymous."

These days, with Radiohead recording their ninth album in total secrecy and shunning all press, it's hard to imagine anonymity bugging them. But early on, the twenty-somethings craved validation. So it was all the more galling when, even after 'Creep' dented pop culture when it was reissued at the behest of EMI in September 1993 (hitting the Top 10, becoming an international hit and being awarded Best Single at the 1994 NME Awards), the public dismissed them as one-hit wonders. Frustrated, the band conjured a new nickname for their world-slaying tune – 'Crap' – and they began to plot an urgent, meteoric reawakening. That meteor would be 'The Bends', released 20 years ago this week.

Nobody knows quite where it came from. Part of the record's legend is its suddenness, the sheer moon-at-your-window size of it. But unlike their Britpop peers, Radiohead didn't see hugeness as its own end. Where 'Pablo Honey' wallowed in grandeur, 'The Bends' weaponised alienation with personal-is-political conviction. After 16 years of Tory austerity, the record summoned a generation's unarticulated despair. And yet 'The Bends' just wouldn't be Radiohead without a mass of contradictions and an unfathomable mystery at its centre.

In 1993, before they earned the privilege of despising fame, Radiohead despised the anticipation. Israel had flashed them their future, but back home, a punishing tour regime (including supports with PJ Harvey) threatened to demolish the band. "I'm fucking ill and physically I'm completely fucked and mentally I've had enough," Thom informed *NME* upon cancelling a high-profile set at Reading that year. Reportedly, EMI proposed a six-month ultimatum: get sorted or get dropped. But head of A&R Keith Wozencroft, who signed and developed the band, remembers otherwise.

"Experimental rock music was getting played and had commercial potential," he says. "People voice

different paranoias, but for the label they were developing brilliantly from 'Pablo Honey'." This became obvious to Paul Kolderie, who had produced 'Pablo Honey' with Sean Slade. As those sessions wrapped, Thom played him a new demo led by 'The Benz' (they later dropped the car pun), a fame-weary anthem that fired shots at '60s-worshipping Britpop. "We'd been struggling to come up with material," Paul says, "so I was a little shocked when he pops out a batch of songs that are *all* better than anything on 'Pablo Honey'."

Early in 1994, Radiohead moved into RAK studios in north London to start developing arrangements for the songs that had appeared on 'The Benz'. Every morning, Thom would brew some tea and start a four-hour solo piano workout. "New songs were pouring out of him," recalls album producer John Leckie. "He's an early riser, and at the time he had a lot of energy. You'd avoid interrupting him." Over time, as tensions pinballed and sessions dragged, these private moments kept Thom sane.

Leckie was then most famous for producing The Stone Roses' first album, but Thom had chosen him for his work on 'Real Life', Magazine's anxious 1978 art-rock classic. EMI gave Radiohead nine weeks to record; panicking, they crammed in everything they knew. Jonny Greenwood paraded increasingly exotic instruments through the studio before settling on his regular Telecaster. Meanwhile, morale dwindled: manager Chris Hufford, tiring of Thom's "mistrust of everybody", considered sacking himself.

Thom described the process as "a total fucking meltdown for two fucking months". As the deadline approached, Leckie recalls, the album was nearer being scrapped than finished: "After those first nine weeks, *every* song was on the line. 'Creep' was getting less radio play and they didn't have a follow-up."

The turnaround came during a Jeff Buckley gig in London. Inspired, Thom dashed to the studio and finally nailed 'Fake Plastic Trees' before bursting into tears. After a break to tour the Far East, the band returned to Richard Branson's Manor studio in Oxfordshire. A week later, the record was finished.

Well, almost. EMI's lead single pick was 'My Iron Lung', a lightning strike of a tune that poked fun at 'Creep's success, with Thom sneering with sarcastic gratitude for its "life support". But after six days at Abbey Road, Leckie still hadn't nailed its radio mix. "Out of nowhere, we got a call, I think from Ed [O'Brien, guitarist]," remembers Sean Slade, half of



"I'M COMPLETELY FUCKED AND ILL" THOM YORKE

THE SECRETS BEHIND 'THE BENDS'

'Planet Telex'

The band recorded 'Planet Telex' through an almighty hangover, with Thom Yorke singing sprawled on the floor trying not to be sick.

'Bullet Proof... I Wish I Was'

To create the background to 'Bullet Proof...', Leckie locked guitarists Ed O'Brien and Jonny Greenwood in isolated booths without monitors, making them bash their guitars to create a foggy, whirling effect.

'Just'

Bored, Jonny and Thom set about cramming too many chords into one song. It became the frenetic 'Just', recorded in a single take without overdubs.





Radiohead in Madrid, Spain, November 1995

the 'Pablo Honey' dream team. "And it was characterised as a completely back-channel communication. He said, 'Listen, Leckie's great but he's taking a whole week to mix a song...'"

"Deadlines were approaching and people were freaking out," adds Paul Kolderie. "So we did it in a couple of hours." Sean insists there was no agreement to mix the full record; instead, as each Slade-Kolderie mix met rave approval, the label sent more. When management heard the finished product – featuring just three of Leckie's mixes – they started jumping around the office. And what of the snubbed producer? "Oh, the final mixes are a bit brash," he grumbles. "They're kind of, 'Zing! Look at me!' Which I didn't think the band wanted... Maybe they chose the best thing. It was just unfortunate that they didn't tell me."

For all the studio magic – the cushy ambience of '(Nice Dream)', the buzzsaw shudders in 'Planet Telex' – what resonates is the songwriting, from satanic space-medley 'My Iron Lung' to one-listen-classic 'Just', with its haywire chorus and crafty Lennon-esque verses. As closer 'Street Spirit (Fade Out)' unspools like a hymn, its last words echo the sensation of the music: "Immerse your soul in love".

It's late '94, and Thom, with shoot-me-now eyes, is sitting for an interview with Deadeye Video. "I have a real problem with pop stars who work for charity and say,

'We're gonna change the world,'" he says, dwelling on Live Aid-type fundraisers. "And places like Rwanda, where there's a military government wiping out millions of people – where did they get the arms from? They got them from the west. We sell these poor little countries armaments... then we send them little bits of money to feed the starving. And I've never heard a pop star say, 'Hang on, surely that's what I should be writing about.'"

The interview is vintage Thom – he's bright, passionate and just tortured enough. It's easy to mock Radiohead as navel-gazing sad sacks, but critics who cried 'misery guts' upon 'The Bends' release a few months later missed the point. If Thom's outlook skewed apocalyptic, it also slammed the self-satisfied cynicism of so many weekend intellectuals. "I want to live and breathe/I want to be part of the human race", he sings on 'The Bends', the flipside to songs like the broodier 'Fake Plastic Trees'.

To fully catch the band's drift, you need to wade into the murky world of capitalism. As the Israeli prophecy of all-consuming fame came true, Radiohead knew their huge success funded one runaway beneficiary: EMI. Getting heard by millions, the band grumbled, meant joining a dirty system, in which every record sale fuels and funds further exploitation. It's an impossible reality, and it complicates and deepens songs like 'Fake Plastic

Trees', which tackle superficial consumerism – the way we mindlessly buy stuff to cheer ourselves up, blanking out the consequences. 'My Iron Lung' even conceded that Radiohead itself is a similar kind of commodity.

Problem is, even if Radiohead did manage to smuggle some healthy scepticism into the nation's living rooms, corporate interests were way ahead. In the postwar era, capitalists cleverly reinvented modern protest using alternative lifestyle marketing. Keep eating meat, they'd reason, but go free range; keep consuming, but recycle; keep visiting supermarkets, but go organic. EMI's mantra would be: keep buying music, but go Radiohead. These minor acts of rebellion actually hindered real structural change, because it made us feel like we'd already done our bit.

It's perhaps these conflicts that springboard Thom's most illuminating quote about 'The Bends', a haunting peek into the darkness of 'Street Spirit (Fade Out)'. "All of our saddest songs have, somewhere in them, at least a glimmer of resolve," he explains. "'Street Spirit' has no resolve. Our fans are braver than I to let that song penetrate them – or maybe they don't realise what they're listening to... that 'Street Spirit' is about staring the fucking devil right in the eyes. And knowing, no matter what the hell you do, he'll get the last laugh."

Shortly after 'The Bends' charted at Number Four, Thom told *NME* he'd be noting down "happy thoughts" to prepare for LP3, an as-yet-untitled juggernaut that promised to annihilate their rep as sulky outcasts, he claimed. Quizzed months later on his progress, however, he playfully conceded something of a lapse. "Nearest I got was writing about the colour of the sky in LA," he grinned. "That particular day, it had rained the night before and you could actually see the sky." Disappointed, the interviewer asked if that was all. "Yeah," Thom responded, chuckling. "That's as happy as it's got, so far." ■

GETTY, CAMERA PRESS/STEVE DOUBILE

'My Iron Lung'

Struggling to capture 'My Iron Lung', producer John Leckie used band audio from their 1994 Astoria concert video, re-recording Thom's vocals in the back of a van.

'Black Star'

With Leckie away, engineer (and unofficial sixth-member-to-be) Nigel Godrich produced 'Black Star' as a possible B-side. The band liked it so much, it was bumped up onto the album.



'High And Dry'

Only a last-minute remix saved 'High And Dry', initially dismissed as a 'Mull Of Kintyre' rip-off by guitarist Jonny Greenwood and "fucking dreadful" by Yorke.

Reviews

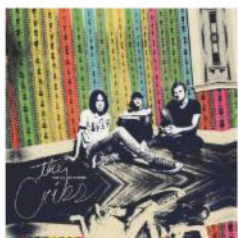
► THE DEFINITIVE VERDICT ■ EDITED BY BEN HOMEWOOD

NME
ALBUM
OF THE WEEK



The Cribs For All My Sisters

The first of two new albums from the Jarman brothers is full of delirious, damaged indie-punk greatness



as one of the most consistently adored guitar bands of the past decade remains as firm and reliable as the incompetence of *Apprentice* contestants, but the fate of Ash, Supergrass et al beckons – years of diminishing returns and dinnertime festival slots – unless they make a Monkeys-level leap into the Big Time.

On their sixth album – the ‘pop one’, recorded in New York with producer Ric Ocasek of The Cars for maximum geek-rock gloss – they give it their best shot

► These are pivotal times in Cribsland. The Jarman brothers’ spell with long-time label Wichita and their brief self-imposed hiatus have expired, and they return with promises of two new albums – one all-out pop, one all-out punk – and everything to play for. Their critical standing

while sticking firmly within their screamy garage-punk parameters. There’s nothing here as experimental as their poetic collaboration with Sonic Youth’s Lee Ranaldo on 2007’s ‘Be Safe’, but right from the off there’s plenty as infectious as ‘Mirror Kissers’ (2005), ‘Cheat On Me’ (2009) or ‘Come On, Be A No-One’ (2012).

‘Different Angle’ rides in on a bold guitar riff and spectral backing coos, and ‘Burning For No One’ takes the new-wave tone of Elvis Costello to unravel what sounds like the story of being ditched by a celebrity (“*Dancing on the screen, I still see you as the star power you used to have... I’ll still watch you through my hands*”). If it wasn’t bassist Gary singing it, you might think it was about guitarist Ryan’s ex-girlfriend Kate Nash.

The Cribs are old masters at such delirious, damaged indie-punk greatness, and ‘For All My Sisters’ is rammed with prime cuts. ‘City Storms’, ‘Summer Of Chances’ and ‘Diamond Girl’ all have a surfeit of magnificent

ILLUSTRATION: JIMMY TURRELL

riffs nicked from the jack lead of James Dean Bradfield, with trampolining chorus hooks and lovelorn breakup lyrics that suggest troubled times. There's a real sense of striving to make this a one-album greatest hits, which is a treat for the devoted but isn't going to divert any passing Mumfords fans at Reading & Leeds.

CHASING CARS

Three more Ric Ocasek-produced albums

Weezer 'Weezer' (1994)

Weezer's debut became an emo benchmark and made Ocasek a much in-demand producer among the US alternative community. He also produced Weezer's 2001 'Green Album' and last year's 'Everything Will Be Alright In The End'.

Guided By Voices 'Do The Collapse' (1999)

GBV made a concerted shot at a pop crossover with their 11th album thanks to glossy, conventional pop tunes such as 'Teenage FBI', which saw the quintet venture into the previously shunned third minute.

Suicide 'Suicide: Alan Vega & Martin Rev' (1980)

Suicide's label boss originally wanted Giorgio Moroder to produce their second album, but Ocasek stepped in to help make a record that would influence early house music and inspire everyone from Primal Scream to Siouxsie And The Banshees.

over-familiar Cribbs album then, but the door is open for the forthcoming Steve Albini-produced 'punk one' to be the death-or-glory game-changer. ■ MARK BEAUMONT

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 23 ► **LABEL** Sony Red UK ► **PRODUCER** Ric Ocasek ► **LENGTH** 46:50 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Finally Free ►2. Different Angle ►3. Burning For No One ►4. Mr Wrong ►5. An Ivory Hand ►6. Simple Story ►7. City Storms ►8. Pacific Time ►9. Summer Of Chances ►10. Diamond Girl ►11. Spring On Broadway ►12. Pink Snow ► **BEST TRACK** Different Angle

8

MORE ALBUMS

The Amazing Picture You

Partisan



"I like and hate them all equally," Christoffer Gunrup,

singer and songwriter in Swedish trio The Amazing, admits of the songs on his band's third album, and that tension courses through 'Picture You'. Opener 'Broken' twists from light and airy guitar to brooding bass, all accompanied by Gunrup's mournful vocals. 'To Keep It Going' is a slow, sad shuffle, Gunrup's lyrics echoing in the distance beneath stately organs and understated snare drums. 'Fryshusfunk' is, as its title suggests, lithe and funky. While it's still shrouded in the frontman's down-in-the-mouth moodiness, its slinking rhythms offer the album's most striking and effective contrast between light and dark. ■ RHIAN DALY

7

Misty Miller Sweet Nothing EP

Relentless

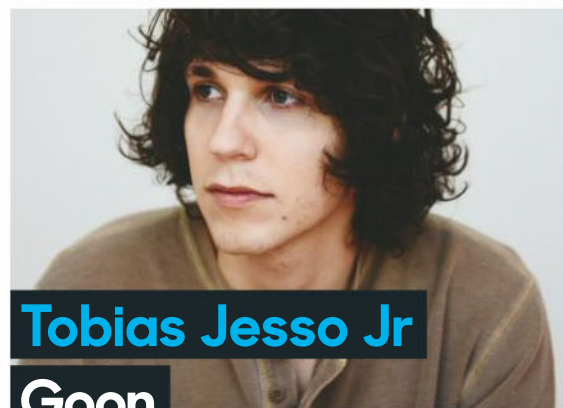


In 2011, when she was only 16, Misty Miller released

a self-titled collection of ukulele-based folk pop. Now 20, the south London songwriter presents this EP as a preview of her debut album proper. Alongside 'Best Friend', taken from the upcoming record, there are four other stripped-back new songs, and it seems she's swapped folk for grunge. The sad-sounding title track is well suited to Miller's anguished vocals, and it's her voice that shines through on this EP. 'Petrified' is the highlight, but the cover of The Only Ones' 1978 single 'Another Girl, Another Planet' feels hackneyed. It's a frustratingly inconsistent glimpse of Miller's new sound.

■ ROBERT COOKE

5



Tobias Jesso Jr

Goon

The Canadian singer's debut is a mix of Lennon-style melodies and sumptuous orchestration

► In August 2013, after a painful breakup and his mother's cancer diagnosis, Tobias Jesso Jr released his first demo. 'Just A Dream' was a brilliant, Lennon-esque introduction. Debut album 'Goon' is a great leap forward. Gloopy, orchestral and lovingly plumped up with strings and skronking brass by producers Chet 'JR' White, Black Keys drummer Pat Carney and Ariel Rechtshaid (Haim), it's driven by 29-year-old Jesso's huge personality and sounds designed to stay with you. Interspersed with tense moments of silence, the thumbed piano of 'Hollywood' will put a lump in your throat. The wailed chorus of 'How Could You Babe' conjures choking sadness, and 'Without You' disguises heartbreak with sumptuous piano. There are cheesy moments – Jesso pretends to cry on



'Crocodile Tears', and 'Can't Stop Thinking About You' mimics the theme from US sitcom *Cheers* – but the compelling fragility of his demos remains. Because of that, 'Goon' is a triumph.

■ BEN HOMEWOOD

8

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 16 ► **LABEL** True Panther ► **PRODUCERS** Chet 'JR' White, Patrick Carney, Ariel Rechtshaid ► **LENGTH** 44:33 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Can't Stop Thinking About You ►2. How Could You Babe? ►3. Without You ►4. Can We Still Be Friends? ►5. The Wait ►6. Hollywood ►7. For You ►8. Crocodile Tears ►9. Bad Words ►10. Just A Dream ►11. Leaving LA ►12. Tell The Truth ► **BEST TRACK** Without You

Surf City Jekyll Island



'Jekyll Island' is the third album from Surf City, a jangly

quartet who formed in Auckland in 2008. The follow-up to 2013's 'We Knew It Was Not Going To Be Like This' is cheerful indie rock with the sort of chiming guitars that invite comparisons to vintage New Zealand combos like

The Chills and The Clean. 'Spec City' and 'Indian Summer' are built on breezy riffs that could have emerged any time during the last 30 years. It's easy enough to imagine someone swooning over, say, 'Hollow Veins', a distillation of Beach Boys chirpiness and Mary Chain guitars, but easier still to envisage the jaded shrugs of those who've heard this all done before.

■ NOEL GARDNER

6

Reviews

Dune Rats

Dune Rats

Ratbag



Judging by the first track of their debut album, Dune Rats

believe in no-frills fun of the young and slightly dumb variety. Set to pacy lo-fi, the only lyrics on 'Dalai Lama, Big Banana, Marijuana' are bawled repetitions of its title. The Brisbane trio also include a two-chord rattle about ET ('ET') and a Fidler-esque ode to hedonism simply called 'Drugs'. However, there are moments of smart subtlety. Driven by bouncing major chords, the excellent 'Funny Guy' is how you'd imagine Mac DeMarco would sound in a punk band, and the campfire singalong 'Lola' sees these long-haired dudes successfully attempt to craft a lighters-aloft love song. Discovering Dune Rats' hidden depths is a pleasure.

LISA WRIGHT

7

Beach Beach

The Sea La Castanya



Majorcan quartet Beach Beach make breezy indie pop

with a rare skill for English-accented vocals, courtesy of core members Pau Riutort and Tomeu Mulet. 'The Sea' follows their 2012 debut 'Tasteless Peace' and was mastered in California by John Golden (Ty Segall, Pissed Jeans), hinting that Beach Beach may have added a jagged edge to their jangle. They haven't. 'A Weak Song' is akin to a less caustic spin on The Wedding Present's confessional fare. Lead single 'Just Like Before' offers sunny, laidback grooves, and the occasional brass parts and handclaps ('White Clothes') are wistful and sometimes blissful, if not exactly beachy. Their shtick is stuck in about 1988, but it's keenly realised nonetheless.

NOEL GARDNER

6

Madonna

Rebel Heart

Super-producers

including Kanye and

Diplo can't save Madge's

unconvincing 13th album

Three years after 2012's EDM-driven 'MDNA' album, 'Rebel Heart' finds 56-year-old Madonna still trying to pass herself off as a teenager. It's a disconnect that has become increasingly grating.

Rather than the return to '80s underground New York promised by lead single 'Living For Love', her 13th album is a scattergun attempt to hit all the bases of modern pop. Instead of having one producer at the helm, as 'MDNA' did with William Orbit, Madonna hired the biggest chart-humping names she could find. Avicii co-writes three tracks: 'HeartBreakCity', 'Devil Pray' – reminiscent of Lady Gaga's crazed 2013 dance tune 'Aura' – and the ballad 'Wash All Over Me'. Kanye produces three: the classy, 'Vogue'-referencing



'Illuminati', 'Holy Water' and 'Wash All Over Me'. Diplo drives four: 'Bitch I'm Madonna', 'Unapologetic Bitch', 'Living For Love', 'Hold Tight'. And Drake associates Dahi and Michael 'Blood' Diamonds take two: 'Devil Pray' and 'Body Shop'. Chance The Rapper

THE DETAILS

► **RELEASE DATE** March 9 ► **LABEL** Interscope ► **PRODUCERS** Madonna, Diplo, Ryan Tedder, Dahi, Michael Diamonds, Avicii, Mike Dean, Kanye West, Toby Gad, Billboard ► **LENGTH** 56:01 ► **TRACKLISTING** ►1. Living For Love ►2. Devil Pray ►3. Ghosttown ►4. Unapologetic Bitch ►5. Illuminati ►6. Bitch I'm Madonna ►7. Hold Tight ►8. Joan Of Arc ►9. Iconic ►10. HeartBreakCity ►11. Body Shop ►12. Holy Water ►13. Inside Out ►14. Wash All Over Me ► **BEST TRACK** Living For Love



(trendy) and Nicki Minaj (bankable) rap on 'Iconic' and 'Bitch I'm Madonna' respectively.

Diplo fares best. The pulsating 'Living For Love' is exactly what this record should have been top-to-tail, and the digi-reggae of 'Unapologetic Bitch' could've fallen off the back of a Major Lazer album. Diplo makes Madge sound fun, but as the candy-bass 'Bitch I'm Madonna' – on which she sings "We're jumping in the pool and swimming with our clothes on/I poured beer in my shoe and got my freak on" – shows, the gulf between her life and her music is now impossible to ignore.

The punchy 'HeartBreakCity' – a song Lorde would dismiss as too juvenile an interpretation of a break-up – illustrates that however on-point her musical instincts, this persona just isn't believable any more. 'Holy Water' implores, "Kiss it better, kiss it better/Make it better, make it wetter/Don't it taste like holy water". Coitus in mid-life can of course still be a richly rewarding experience, but must we hear quite so many details? Twee ballad 'Body Shop' hinges on a similarly tortuous lyrical conceit ("My transmission's blown... You can keep it in overnight/You can do whatever you like").

Ultimately, 'Rebel Heart' feels like a wasted opportunity. Trite self-empowerment anthem 'Iconic' informs us that there's only two letters difference between Icon and I Can't. Sadly, there are also two letters between class and ass.

GAVIN HAYNES

5

Turzi

C Record Makers



On third album 'C', Romain Turzi adds the operatic

voice of Caroline Vallain to his mix of krautrock and psych. Alongside the Versailles musician and his seven-piece band, Vallain's powerful soprano – best heard on 'Cygne' – is used more as musical texture than a standalone element, bestowing drama, mystery and classical elegance on

a record where atmosphere is king and genre is an afterthought. 'Chouette' opens with spooky synth and clavinet before breaking into fuzzy car-chase funk, and the garage stomp of 'Cardinal' is almost punky. Unfolding like a psych compilation from Manchester's Amorphous Androgynous (who included Turzi's 'Afghanistan' on their 2009 volume), 'C' is hardly commercial, but it emerges as a hugely rewarding listen.

BEN CARDEW

7

The Monochrome Set

Tapete



It's a rare boon to find a reunited band who've matured

without becoming dull. The Monochrome Set, formed in Hornsey, north London in 1978, were early proponents of jangly '80s indie with a bit of new-wave spike; they stuttered to a halt several times but came back renewed in 2012. 'Spaces Everywhere', their

third album since returning, is spooky, catchy, skiffly pop, swinging between scratchy rockabilly on 'Iceman', big Who-like crescendos on 'Avenue' and, on 'The Z-Train', adventures in Coral-esque psych. Throughout, singer Bid's smooth baritone paints intriguing vignettes ("He was the best thing that you've ever seen in Swansea", goes 'When I Get To Hollywood'), adding colour to an already rich album.

MATTHEW HORTON

8

Reviews

Moon King

Secret Life Last Gang



Toronto dream-rock duo Moon King are a frustrating

prospect. Frequently on this second album, Daniel Benjamin (whose brother Airick Woodhead makes glitchy electronic indie as Doldrums) and Maddy Wilde put a fresh spin on psychedelia and hit on

something almost brilliant, like the synthpop motorik of 'Roswell' or the Japandroids-in-Berlin of 'Apocalypse'. But there are also experimental misfires like 'Threads' – a mix of big funky drums and delicate whimsy – and limp copyist fare like 'Impossible's retro velvet grunge (think Mazzy Star). The occasional combinations of prom-night blues and slow, druggy atmospheres show promise, but there's an issue with quality control.

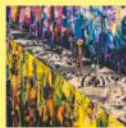
■ JOHN CALVERT

6

Plastic Mermaids

Inhale The Universe EP

Cross Keys



On this second EP, Plastic Mermaids combine the sounds of alt-folk, space-rock and chamber pop. The Isle Of Wight quintet echo the orchestral and extraterrestrial sounds of Spiritualized on tracks like 'Playing In Your Mind', where vocalist Douglas Richards offers his best Jason Pierce impression as

he wearily pleads, "God said I would be alright". The pick of the bunch, though, is seven-minute odyssey 'Saturn'; strings and theremin interweave on the cinematic opening before the whole thing launches into a piano-led pop fantasy that The Flaming Lips would be proud of. The cowbell and bass-heavy funk of its climax is the high point of a record that maintains an uplifting atmosphere throughout.

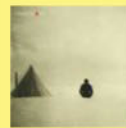
■ JAMES BENTLEY

7

Inventions

Maze Of Woods

Bella Union



The two members of Inventions already have niches in modern indie. Mark T Smith emotes, wordlessly, in windy Texan post-rockers Explosions In The Sky, while Portland-based Matthew Cooper releases dignified ambient as Eluvium. 'Maze Of Woods', their second album together, cleaves more to Eluvium than EITS, in that it exhibits a degree of elegance. On 'Escapers' and 'Slow Breathing Circuit', weathered-sounding synth lines smudge together, as if in pastel shades; elsewhere, filmic snippets and samples of swelling choirs add gravitas. Landing somewhere between Jon Hopkins and a more accessible Tim Hecker, Inventions do very little with the wheel, but make inertia seem quite appealing.

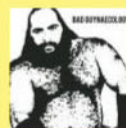
■ NOEL GARDNER

6

Bad Guys

Bad Guynaeology

Riot Season



The hairy, fat-bellied figure adorning the sleeve of Bad Guys' second album rather sums up its sound. 'Bad Guynaeology', which follows the east London heavy-rock quartet's self-titled 2013 debut, is ridiculous, funny and vulgar. Six-minute opener 'Crime' is a grotty Motörhead chug about a child – possibly gravel-voiced frontman Stu – who steals a toy truck from Toys 'R' Us and tells his dad: "You should've brought me the truck, YOU FUCK!" 'Reaper' is superfast, with thundering drums and widdling ZZ Top guitar. They sound craziest on 'Motorhome', a ferocious fantasy about buying a caravan: "Heading to your town/Fucking in your garden/Trampling on your flowers!" Never mind bad, these guys sound truly abhorrent.

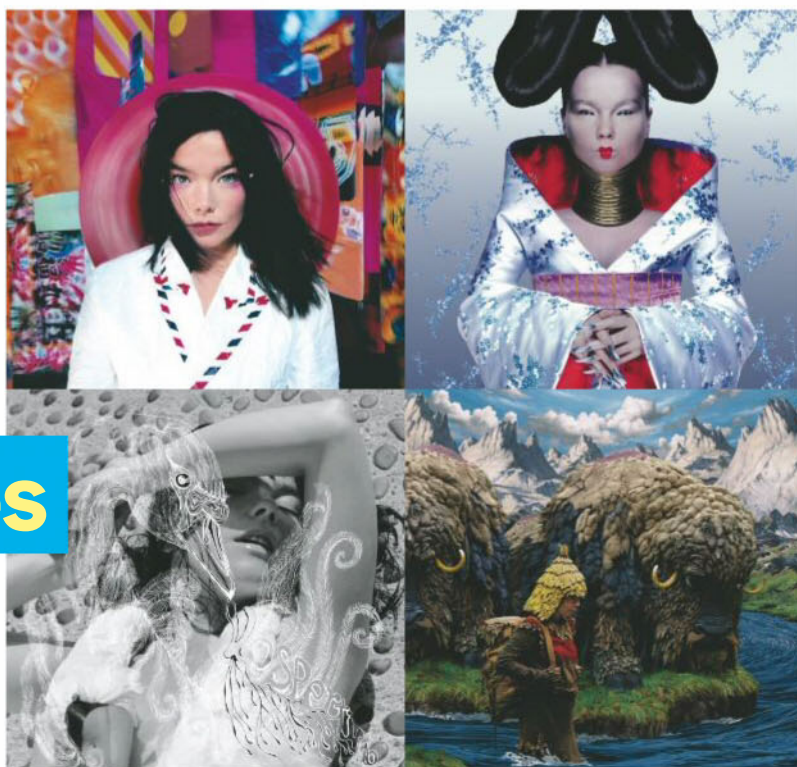
■ BEN HOMEWOOD

7

BOOK

Weighty retrospective of the visionary innovator's wild and wonderful career

Björk Archives



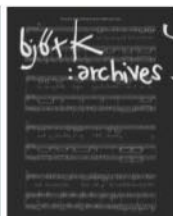
Released to coincide with her career-crowning exhibition at New York's Museum of Modern Art, Björk's second official book presents itself as a very serious tome. Its sleek black slipcase with slim softbacks inside, pastel-coloured and discreet like academic journals, demand respect.

And no wonder. This is a woman who's spent at least half of her daring artistic life being dismissed as a puffin-eating pixie, having her great leaps of imagination in music, visual art and video reduced to words like "kooky" and "feisty". So if the detailed history of her career placed in the context of contemporary art movements by MoMA director Klaus Biesenbach is a little on the dry side, we can forgive him. And *Archives* is a fascinating read for serious fans. Musicology professor Nicola Dibben, a collaborator on 2011's 'Biophilia', offers a high-minded essay on the feminist, disruptive aspects of Björk's creativity, and Alex Ross, author of *The Rest Is Noise* and music critic for *The New Yorker*, provides a beautifully written piece on the manifold influences of Björk's musical innovation. But by this point, even super-serious fans may be starting to wonder: where's the fun?

Leave it to the lady herself to bring it. A magical

booklet of emails between Björk and philosopher Timothy Morton is a wild, wonderful conversation full of epiphanies and sympathies, incorporating Michael Jackson, daft goths and the vibration of subatomic particles in its dizzying leaps, alive with the thrill of falling in love with someone's brain. Just as good is the thickest of the five books, a psychogeographical journey through the 49-year-old's albums by her constant lyrical collaborator, Icelandic poet Són. In it, the stages, changing characters and images of her career are woven into a loose, lyrical story. And finally, the clearest sign of all that she hasn't lost her pop-culture roots: colour stickers of every single and album sleeve. For all the attempts to define Björk contained in *Archives* ("I have been doing a little reading and trying to find folks who could help me define

what 'ism' I am," she tells Morton), they're probably the only labels in the fancy box that'd stay stuck. ■ EMILY MACKAY



THE DETAILS

► PUBLICATION DATE

March 2

► PUBLISHER

Thames & Hudson

9

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FILM



Dark but hilarious Lena Dunham-endorsed comedy about a woman struggling with her sexuality

Appropriate Behaviour

Desiree Akhavan's *Appropriate Behaviour* begins with a twenty-something woman chucking a strap-on dildo into a dustbin. It's a punchy opening to the actor-director-writer's much-hyped debut feature film, which after its premiere at 2014's Sundance Festival, led *Girls* star Lena Dunham to offer Akhavan a part in her show's latest series. The parallels with *Girls*' deadpan realism are obvious. Based in New York, *Appropriate Behaviour* tells the awkwardly comic, semi-autobiographical story of Shirin (played by Akhavan), a smart but self-involved young woman who feels detached from her own existence.

Shirin, the bisexual daughter of Iranian immigrants, is suffering in the aftermath of her first relationship with a woman. She has just broken up with Maxine (Canadian actress Rebecca Henderson), and is questioning her career: she reckons she was only hired by a newspaper in the interests of equal opportunities, so instead gets a job teaching filmmaking to six-year-olds. They make her lessons a misery. Shirin is directionless and struggling – traits that Akhavan neatly illustrates in a tense early exchange with her more successful older brother, a doctor, who goads, "You got a masters in journalism, and now you're gonna do jack shit with it?"



DIRECTOR
Desiree Akhavan
IN CINEMAS
March 6

Akhavan – herself a Persian-American bisexual former film student – darts between past and present, illuminating Shirin's uncomfortable relationship via cutting flashbacks, with a structure similar to Woody Allen's 1977 movie *Annie Hall*. One scene in a bookshop is a particularly obvious and well-executed homage to Allen's masterpiece, which Akhavan has cited as an influence. In another, we see the couple's first meeting, on a doorstep outside a party they've both left because of "social anxiety". "I like girls like you," Shirin tells Maxine, "Manly, but also a bit like a lady."

The haphazard nature of the switches between past and present can be difficult to follow, but the flashbacks are effective nonetheless. On Maxine's birthday, Shirin's difficulties with her sexuality and her family's strict Persian values are unflinchingly exposed. "You're ruining my birthday!" Maxine spits during a row about Shirin's reluctance to tell her parents about their relationship. "You're ruining my twenties," comes Shirin's devastating response. The scenes set in the present are funnier. Shirin fumbles through an excruciating one-night stand

with a humourless hipster and an explicit, near-wordless threesome with a kinky middle-aged couple. She gradually becomes less self-absorbed, even making inroads with the kids in her filmmaking class. Shirin is embarrassing, horribly self-absorbed, loving and, ultimately, confused. The sense that Akhavan is drawing from experience is palpable, and her story is moving. Far from another trendy comedy, *Appropriate Behaviour* is sharp, charming and crammed full of life, warts and all. **NICK LEVINE**

8

CINEMA

Still Alice



Based on Lisa Genova's 2007 novel, *Still Alice* is dominated by a magnificent, Oscar-winning performance from Julianne Moore. She plays Alice Howland, a linguistics professor and mother who is diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's disease after her 50th birthday. Moore – who spent time talking to sufferers of the disease and doctors who treat it – captures the anger and frustration high-achieving Alice feels as she fumbles over words and forgets appointments. As Alice's identity is stripped away, Moore's portrayal of her deterioration is intensely vivid. Other characters – including Alice's husband John (Alec Baldwin) – may be under-developed, but the climactic interaction between Alice and youngest daughter Lydia (*Twilight*'s Kristen Stewart) is immensely affecting.

NICK LEVINE

7

CINEMA

Hyena



Gerard Johnson's gritty British thriller follows a corrupt, coke-snorting undercover policeman (the excellent Peter Ferdinando, who also starred in Johnson's previous film, 2009's *Tony*) as he becomes embroiled in a bloody turf war between rival London drug traffickers. Though *Hyena* never fully overcomes its lack of originality – James McAvoy played a similar role in 2013's *Filth* – its depiction of the capital's crime scene is undeniably powerful. Most impressive are Johnson's slow-motion set pieces, which owe a debt to Nicolas Winding Refn's *Drive*. Aided by a seedy synthpop score from The The's Matt Johnson (the director's older brother), this nasty horror sucks you into a grisly world of duplicitous cops and brutish criminals prepared to butcher anyone who gets in their way.

NICK LEVINE

6

CINEMA

Kill The Messenger



In this drama – based on a true story and directed by *Homeland* producer Michael Cuesta – Jeremy Renner (*The Avengers*) plays Californian newspaper journalist Gary Webb, who in 1996 uncovered CIA involvement in drug trafficking. Based on *Dark Alliance*, Webb's 1998 book, and Nick Schou's 2004 novel *Kill The*

Messenger, the film details the tragic events that occurred after Webb's reports were discredited and he left his job to pursue his investigation. There are odd cheesy moments – in one scene Webb cranks up The Clash's 'Know Your Rights' as he types – but Renner is arresting, and Michael Sheen (*Frost/Nixon*) executes his cameo as a lawyer with aplomb. Overall, this is an emotional, powerful retelling of Webb's story.

DAN BRIGHTMORE

7

CINEMA

Dreamcatcher



Dreamcatcher opens with shots of the glistening skyscrapers of central Chicago, but the film explores a harrowing aspect of the city's underbelly. Directed by British documentary maker Kim Longinotto, it follows Brenda Myers-Powell, a former prostitute, drug addict and abuse victim. She runs the Dreamcatcher

Foundation for women who are on the streets, in prison or at risk of harm. Driving around Chicago in her van with fellow reformed addict Stephanie Daniels-Wilson, eccentric character Brenda helps people like Temeka, a homeless 15-year-old prostitute. The film is full of powerful, unflinching shots, and in the end we forget Longinotto is observing at all, such is the emotional clarity of her subjects' stories.

BEN HOMEWOOD

8



Twin Peaks

100 Club, London

Tuesday, February 17

**Crowdsurfing, stage invasions
and head wounds: business as
usual for the Chicago punks**

PHOTO BY POONEH GHANA

“Oh shit!” shouts Twin Peaks guitarist Clay Frankel at the end of a raucous version of ‘I Found A New Way’. A fan in the front row has found herself on the receiving end of an accidental thwacking from Frankel’s guitar and is clutching her head in pain. Despite adding new touring member Colin Croom on keyboards and guitar to give scrappy rock’n’roll vignettes like ‘Flavor’ and ‘Telephone’ a fuller, thicker texture, tonight is business as usual for the Chicago quartet – it’s pure chaos. As bassist Jack Dolan bravely tries to block the flow of fans rushing onto the low stage, the buoyant ‘Fade Away’ and the scuzzy ‘Making Breakfast’ incite crowdsurfing. Bodies are still flying when last song ‘Boomers’ crashes to a close, bringing an end to a night of thrilling, dangerous and vital punk bedlam. ■ RHIAN DALY

Twin Peaks’
Cadlen Lake
James onstage
in London

Sleater-Kinney

BBC 6 Music Festival
O2 Academy, Newcastle
Friday, February 20

Their first UK show in nine years
proves the Portland trio are still
a vital force in rock

At the end of January, Sleater-Kinney did a live Q&A in New York to commemorate the release of 'No Cities To Love', the Portland trio's first album since they went on hiatus nine years ago. After 20-plus years of enduring journalists' fumbled enquiries about *what it meant* that they were Hard-Rocking Women In Music, one of the interviewers nailed the perfect question about Sleater-Kinney's feminist riffs: "Does rocking hard feel like gender equality to you?"

Carrie Brownstein, Janet Weiss and Corin Tucker looked relieved that someone had interpreted their inherently political power without resorting to clunky generalisations. Sleater-Kinney are an uncommonly articulate band who have no problem conveying their message: Brownstein answered by calling their music "an unapologetic obliteration of the sacred". But it quickly becomes apparent from their 40-minute set at the second BBC 6 Music festival – this year happening in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne and Gateshead – that the interviewer's intuition was right. Sleater-Kinney are onstage in their most righteous incarnation, a privilege that UK audiences have waited nine years to see – their last shows here were a short regional run in 2006.

In contrast to an aimless, fried-sounding set from bill-openers The War On Drugs, every note played by Sleater-Kinney – expanded to a four-piece with Sky Larkin's Katie Harkin on guitar and tambourine – is violently essential, infused with a sense of

occasion and defiance. Finally seeing a band like this for the first time – a band whose songs, message and very existence have informed and reinforced so many listeners' lives – feels like witnessing some

sort of religious totem in the flesh. There is a profound, rare power and intent in the way Brownstein high-kicks and windmills and spits her lines; in hearing Corin Tucker's feral wail straight from the source; in watching Janet Weiss, one of the best drummers in rock, wrench killer fills out of her stadium-worthy kit. They are a band unashamedly intent on excellence, which they deliver in spades tonight.

Tucker has talked about how Sleater-Kinney are less confrontational this time around, but there is still an antagonistic narrative to tonight's setlist. They open with four songs from 'No Cities To Love'. 'Price Tag', which has the molten power of an Iron Maiden song tonight, is sung from the perspective of a shelf-stacking mother despairing at an oppressive system. Tucker then grits her teeth through 'Fangless', which rejoices in the impotence of a once-powerful patriarchal figure. The set rises up to 'Surface Envy' and 'A New Wave', both joyous odes to the power

SETLIST

- Price Tag
- Fangless
- Surface Envy
- A New Wave
- One Beat
- Jumpers
- Bury Our Friends
- Modern Girl
- Dig Me Out
- Entertain

SEEING A BAND LIKE THIS FEELS LIKE WITNESSING SOME SORT OF RELIGIOUS TOTEM IN THE FLESH

of unbreakable relationships. During the latter, Brownstein repeatedly hits herself in the head as she spits the verses – Sleater-Kinney are a more theatrical outfit than they used to be, imbuing their set with added physical drama – while she and Tucker play the song's zippy riffs in an unusually queasy key.

They do the same for 'Jumpers' from their last album, 2005's 'The Woods', ripping out the comforting undercurrent of its recorded version and making it sound twisted and nervy. After the discombobulatingly shrill rattle of comeback single 'Bury Our Friends', they dip back into 'The Woods' for 'Modern Girl', whose gentle, loping backing leads Brownstein to lean her head against Tucker's shoulder – a moving and tender gesture during this otherwise unrelenting show.

Sentimentality is kicked to the kerb for the final two songs, however, as they peel back the years to dig into more confrontational material. The guitars of 'Dig Me Out' thrash





Corin Tucker and (below) Carrie Brownstein and Janet Weiss in Newcastle



noisily, Brownstein unleashing her classic Pete Townshend-inspired arm swings as Tucker asks sarcastically, “*Do you get nervous watching me bleed?*” The final song of this too-short set, ‘Entertain’ (again from ‘The Woods’) takes on an added resonance tonight. In 2005, Brownstein explained that the lyric “*You come around looking 1984/Nostalgia, you’re using it like a whore*” was directly inspired by Interpol: “How can you sound that much like Ian Curtis and be singing about *nothing?*” Poor Interpol are up next on the line-up, left to mop Sleater-Kinney’s abattoir floor.

Never mind rocking-as-gender-equality; after nine years away and in just 40 minutes, Sleater-Kinney have firmly established themselves as a dominant rock’n’roll force. Roll on March and their UK tour proper. ■ LAURA SNAPES

10

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MORE GIGS

Alabama Shakes Islington Assembly Hall, London



Thursday, February 19
It’s been almost two years since Alabama Shakes’ last UK gig, and they’ve

prepared a special treat for this low-key return. Starting with the slow thrash of ‘Dunes’, the Athens, Alabama quartet play all 12 songs from upcoming second album ‘Sound & Color’. Lean and soulful, the new tunes are even more evocative of the rootsy sound of FAME and Muscle Shoals, the legendary studios in their home state, than 2012 debut ‘Boys & Girls’. Brittany Howard’s voice is known for its power, but her dazzling falsetto on ‘Future People’ shows she’s mastered delicate too, and the slinky struts of ‘Don’t Wanna Fight’ and ‘Give Me All Your Love’ add gloss to a brilliant comeback show. ■ ANDY WELCH

8

Together Pangea Birthdays, London

Tuesday, February 17

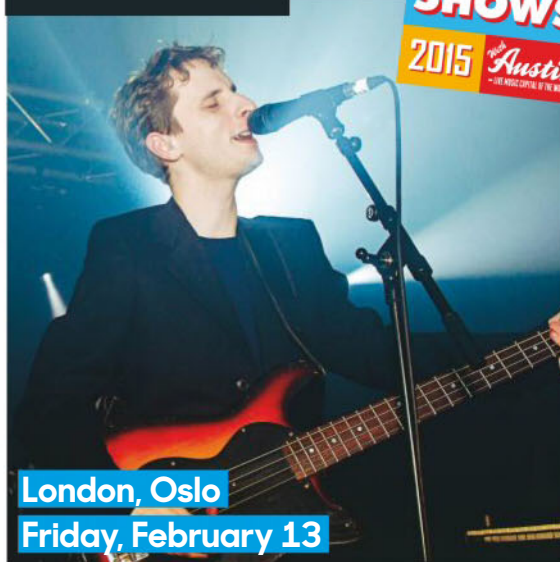
Together Pangea have a stage-invasion problem. Sounding like

the bastard offspring of Californian punks NOFX and Rancid, they blast through an opening volley including ‘Sick Shit’, new song ‘I Looked In Too’ and ‘Badillac’. During ‘Offer’, fans rush the stage, meaning the Los Angeles trio can barely see each other. There’s no let-up, so frontman William Keegan dives into what’s left of the crowd in front of him, giving them a taste of their own medicine. As the band bash out a cover of German banjoist Dad Horse Experience’s ‘Gates Of Heaven’, the singer is hoisted towards the ceiling, losing his shit just as much as his audience.

■ KEVIN EG PERRY

7

These New Puritans



London, Oslo
Friday, February 13

Shrouded in dry ice, the Londoners return with two new songs and their cacophonous hits

▶ Oslo’s stage is crammed with so many wires, dials and bits of electronic equipment, there’s hardly room for These New Puritans. The last time the trio played live – save for a festival date in December – was at London’s Barbican for a sit-down gig last April. Tonight’s a proper fan affair: everyone squashed towards the front and soaked in dry ice. The band are joined in the darkness by two longtime collaborators, Portuguese singer Elisa Rodrigues and Graham Sutton, veteran frontman of east London post-punks Bark Psychosis, who stands behind a stack of keyboards huffing an electronic cigarette for most of the set.

This is something of a comeback gig, so they play the ‘hits’. George Barnett’s drumming on magnificent opener ‘Dream’, from 2013’s ‘Field Of Reeds’, is painstaking, a sustained slow-paced circle of the kit. By ‘Three Thousand’ there are howls from the crowd. During the thunderous ‘Attack Music’ the strobes/smoke combination obscures the band entirely: they might as well be the four horsemen of the apocalypse galloping over our heads and out into east London.

They play two new tunes: the strangely named ‘JGGLR’, featuring a looped vocal refrain and repetitive beats to match, and the labyrinthine ‘The Grip’, which frontman Jack Barnett explains is a world exclusive. “We’re These New Puritans,” he says, a waving hand emerging from the fog. One of the most ear-splitting, unashamedly experimental bands in Britain are back to batter our eardrums once again.

■ HAZEL SHEFFIELD

SETLIST

- ▶ Dream
- ▶ En Papier/Gloria
- ▶ Three Thousand
- ▶ Organ Eternal
- ▶ Fragment Two
- ▶ JGGLR
- ▶ We Want War
- ▶ Attack Music
- ▶ Where The Trees Are On Fire
- ▶ The Grip
- ▶ Drum Courts – Where Corals Lie

7

51

Pete Doherty

London, Brixton Jamm
Monday, February 23

Fresh out of rehab,
Pete plays Libs,
'shambles and solo hits
plus two new songs at
one of his old haunts



At precisely 10pm, Pete Doherty strides onto the stage at Brixton Jamm looking trim and tidy in a neckerchief and denim jacket, and launches into a note-perfect rendition of Libertines classic 'Music When The Lights Go Out'. The 500 Doherty disciples packed into the south London venue lose it. And why not? These are Pete's first UK shows since he returned from rehab in Thailand, his first since the Libs' 2014 megagigs and possibly the first he's played sober in over a decade. The atmosphere is jubilant, rowdy, hopeful.

The 35-year-old has played the 500-capacity Jamm many times over the years – it's his go-to venue for a low-key show – but never like this.

Where previously he's been late and somewhat dishevelled, tonight he's on time, and playing as part of a tight musical unit with Babyshambles members Drew McConnell (bass) and Adam Falkner (drums), and his occasional violinist Miki Beavis. The doe-eyed second track 'Arcady' climaxes with an extended face-off between Pete on acoustic guitar and Drew on electric bass that's both



perfectly precise and clearly rehearsed. The crowd sing back 'Flags Of The Old Regime' – a tribute to Amy Winehouse – word for word, its sadness enhanced by wistful violins. 'Last Of The English Roses' finishes with Doherty sparking up a cigarette and throwing the rest of the pack – lighter and all – into the jostling crowd, who scuffle to grab the spoils.

It's one of only a few interactions. Instead of chat, Pete's focus is purely on the music, and the setlist shines a light on his formidable back catalogue. Babyshambles favourite 'Merry Go Round' is all delicately plucked sweetness; 'There She Goes' slinks along, its bassline shamelessly robbed from The Cure's 'The Love Cats'; and a roaring version of 'Don't Look Back Into The Sun' brims with poignancy and positive energy. With The Libertines currently writing a third album, Pete playing old hits feels less like nostalgia and more like revelling in the current excitement around the band. 'What A Waster' taps into the

mood, driven by Pete's frayed guitar, and lesser-known Libs cut 'All At Sea' suggests there could be some truth in reports that the band are rooting through their old songs while writing the new album.

After the light-hearted knees-up of 'Beg, Steal Or Borrow' he tells the crowd: "I'm gonna have a quick break." No disappearing act tonight, though – within five minutes he's back and into a powerful 'Time For Heroes'. A couple of new songs – the first a classic acoustic ballad, the second mumbled and introspective – are interspersed with a raucous 'Up The Bracket' and 'Killamangiro'. 'Side Of The Road' is augmented by a picked solo, and the lyrics to 'UnBiloTitled' ("You think that you know me, you're pissing me off") gain new resonance now their author is in a position to stick two fingers up at his detractors.

The night ends with Pete's nihilistic calling card, 'Fuck Forever'. His choir of 500 wails it back at him before the closing guitar stabs conclude a celebratory homecoming. It's good to have him back. ■ LISA WRIGHT

SETLIST

- Music When The Lights Go Out
 - Arcady
- Flags Of The Old Regime
- Last Of The English Roses
- Merry Go Round
- There She Goes
- Don't Look Back Into The Sun
- What A Waster
 - All At Sea
- Nothing Comes To Nothing
- Beg, Steal Or Borrow
- Time For Heroes
- Side Of The Road
- Up The Bracket
 - New song
- Killamangiro
- UnBiloTitled
 - New song
- Fuck Forever



Pete Doherty
onstage in
London,
February 2015

MORE GIGS

Darla The Garage, London



Tuesday, February 17
A few days after this gig Darlia will release the lacklustre 'Petals' EP, an attempt to

sate fans hungry for their long-awaited debut album. While a lack of new songs hampers the EP, in a live setting the Blackpool trio rage through their snarling tunes with enough distortion for it not to matter. 'I've Never Been To Ohio' smothers its early REM melody in clouds of fuzz, and standouts 'Dear Diary' and 'Candyman' evoke those late-'90s days when Placebo seemed like one of the most exciting bands on the planet. Darlia deliver everything with bags of power, verve and passion. It's hard not to lap it up.

■ TOM GOODWYN

8

Ex Hex Brudenell Social Club, Leeds

Wednesday, February 11
Put it down to jet lag, but Ex Hex look sleepy as they walk onstage. Alarm bells ring when guitarist/frontwoman Mary Timony fluffs the springy chords of opener 'Don't Wanna Lose', but after starting again, she nails its wriggling solo. After that, tiredness gives way to all-out fun. In front of whirlwind drummer Laura Harris (ex-The Aquarium) Timony's regular face-offs with bassist Betsy Wright (ex-Fire Tapes) descend into playful shoves and belly laughs during 'Beast', the former Autoclave and White Flag singer shredding like AC/DC's Angus Young and giggling at her cock-rock posing. "You guys look so serious," she tells the crowd, before getting back to rocking out with her friends without a care.

■ ROBERT COOKE

8

THE VIEW FROM THE CROWD



Tommy, 24, London
"I saw ham at Hyde Park and in Amsterdam. This was 10/10 in my view – it was a lot more intimate than those so you appreciate it more."



Debbie, 29, London
"The first time I went to see him was nine years ago and it was disgusting. Tonight it was tame, in a good way; it was so professional. He actually looks alright."



Tina, 23, Turkey
"He seemed a bit less shambolic and more together. I think he'll actually remember it – before when I've seen him, it's like he wasn't really there."



Jay, 20, Australia
"I came from Australia just for this. I love Pete. He's a story that keeps on giving. You never know what he's gonna do next."

Interpol



The Forum, London Tuesday, February 17

The big-hearted New Yorkers prove they're more than just doom and gloom

▶ Doom, doom, doom shakes the room. Halfway into 'My Blue Supreme', a black-clad Paul Banks is cradling his mic like it's the fragile skull of his dying lover. Next to him, Daniel Kessler is tapping his guitar like he's flicking an on-off switch on his mum's life support machine.

These days, Interpol are frontloading their live show with the pain of their fifth album, late-2014's 'El Pintor'. The endless, lightless tunnel of 'Anywhere', the malicious flickering riffs of 'My Desire' and the despairing 'Everything Is Wrong' are all shot off early. Even with a directness that its self-titled 2010 predecessor lacked, 'El Pintor's' melodies find Paul Banks at his most oblique. Live, it's heavy on grinding, churning bass – like a 60ft octopus in chains – which is ironic given that's exactly what departed bassist Carlos Dengler brought to the band. Brad Truax, his replacement, is inputting all of this from side-of-stage, having mastered the knack of standing

just close enough to interact with the band, but far enough away to indicate he isn't part of it. 'Breaker 1' pops up after 'Lights',

the only setlist survivor from 'Interpol', and the dark 'All The Rage Back Home' opens the encore.

Yet it's not all doom and gloom. In fact, when Banks reaches up into the hook on the back end of 'Evil' and sings "*It took a lifespan, with no cellmate*", his pain is gradually transmuted into profound pleasure. There's further uplift in the creepy enchantment of 'Pioneer To The Falls', the pining white-boy soul of 'Not Even Jail' and the spinning blades of 'Slow Hands'. The latter elicits actual outbreaks of dancing, Kessler himself giddily skipping back and forth to the drum riser.

When Interpol were stuck in snow for 50 hours in upstate New York late last year, they should've just got up on the roof of their tourbus and played 'NYC'. Taken from 2002's 'Turn On The Bright Lights', it appears here as their third-last song, and could melt the Arctic tundra with its blaze of downcast warmth. By the time they sign off, sounding half-cut on 'Untitled', everyone's on their feet, beaming. It's a song that seems to grow in bloodshot pathos with every year that passes, stained with the tears of however many more memory-haunted streets they've trod.

These are awkward clinches, but gloom isn't what Interpol are about. These songs are wracked by half-chances, wondering about the never-weres, scared of tomorrow yet always big-hearted. They are doomy, not doomed; bruised, but hopeful.

■ GAVIN HAYNES

SETLIST

- ▶ Say Hello To The Angels
- ▶ Anywhere
- ▶ My Blue Supreme
- ▶ Evil
- ▶ Leif Erikson
- ▶ My Desire
- ▶ Everything Is Wrong
- ▶ Rest My Chemistry
- ▶ The New
- ▶ Lights
- ▶ Breaker 1
- ▶ Pioneer To The Falls
- ▶ Not Even Jail
- ▶ Slow Hands
- ▶ All The Rage Back Home
- ▶ NYC
- ▶ PDA
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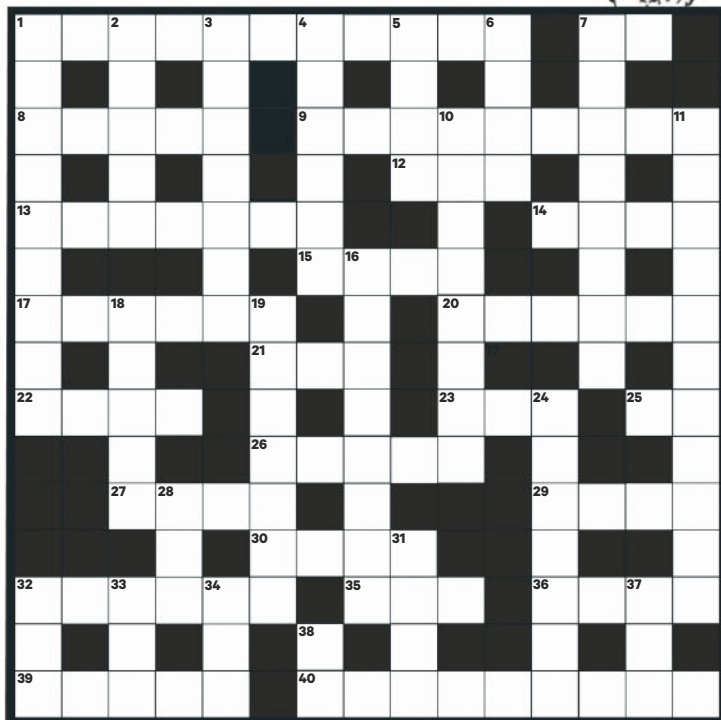
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CLUES ACROSS

- 1 Book Kim Gordon. She knows her place (4-2-1-4)
7+8A She'll fit right in among the 'Happy People' (2-1-4)
 9 (See 39 across)
12+31D Lily Allen ain't for remixing (3-4)
13+26A "All the lonely people, where do they all come from", 1966 (7-5)
 14 The Prodigy have nothing for the blokes (4)
15+36A Made nine changes to Jagwar Ma number (3-1-4)
 17 Finally, a classic by Etta James (2-4)
 20 (See 5 down)
 21 Frank Turner shows anger at having to complete the album 'Love, ___ & Song' (3)
 22 Mercury Prize-winning album by Young Fathers might be difficult to perform live (4)
 23 Black Sabbath album found hidden in a dirty room (3)
 25 (See 39 across)
 26 (See 13 across)
 27 Aphex Twin album found hidden in a messy room (4)
 29 Canadian noise-rockers sounding at home in northern France (4)
 30 Roddy Frame was on the

- crest of a wave with this solo album (4)
32+3D Samuel T Herring gets down to it as vocalist with this band (6-7)
 35 Get down and complete the following: 'So Why So ___', Manic Street Preachers (3)
 36 (See 15 across)
39+25A+9A Bob Dylan evidently had some cuts on this album (5-2-3-6)
 40 He duetted with Siouxsie Sioux on 1994 single 'Interlude' (9)

CLUES DOWN

- 1 Elvis Presley would have been at home with this Paul Simon album (9)
 2 Swervedriver's music to give you a lift (5)
 3 (See 32 across)
4+7D Carl Barat And The Jackals await a violent reaction to this single (1-5-2-6)
5+20A Their hits in the '60s include 'Gin House Blues' and 'High In The Sky' (4-6)
 6 "My face upon the concrete, the ___ is in my mouth", from Jake Bugg's 'Slumville Sunrise' (4)
 7 (See 4 down)

- 10 Album that showed just how deadly System Of A Down could be (8)
 11 No, Dr Zyenski, that's a terrible arrangement for Jamiroquai (11)
 16 American punks who got their own back (8)
 18 Trio who said their last album was a 'Mess'. We shouldn't have believed them (5)
 19 It's more awful to find him out in the 'Morning Dew' (3-4)
 24 They sent a 'Rocket To Russia' and took the 'Road To Ruin' (7)
 28 The second person to name a George Harrison song (3)
 31 (See 12 across)
 32 'When We Was ___', the second George Harrison clue. Groovy (3)
 33 Album from The Calling available in Brentwood (3)
 34 Look embarrassed at being given the Elbow back in 2001 (3)
 37 Have a look at this Smashing Pumpkins single (3)
 38 Arctic Monkeys begin to do 5 down (1-1)

FEBRUARY 21 ANSWERS

ACROSS 1 Congregation, 8 Far, 9 Sidewalking, 10 A Punk, 11 You Win Again, 13 Fun, 14+23A Stay With Me, 15 I'm Lucky, 17 Neptune, 19 New Moon, 26 Orb, 27 Next, 28 Webb, 29+24A Roll With It, 31 Start To Run
DOWN 1 Cassy O, 2 No Doubt, 3+25D Raw Exit, 4 Galvanize, 5 Twin Atlantic, 6 Organic, 7 Broken, 8 Fluffy, 12 I'm Your Man, 16 Kim, 17 Nowhere, 18 Pitbull, 20 Wah Heat, 21 October, 22 New Born, 30 Jr

Normal NME terms and conditions apply, available at NME.COM/terms. Cut out the crossword and send it, along with your name, address and email, marking the envelope with the issue date, before Tuesday, March 17, 2015, to: Crossword, NME, 8th Floor, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU. Winners will be notified via email.

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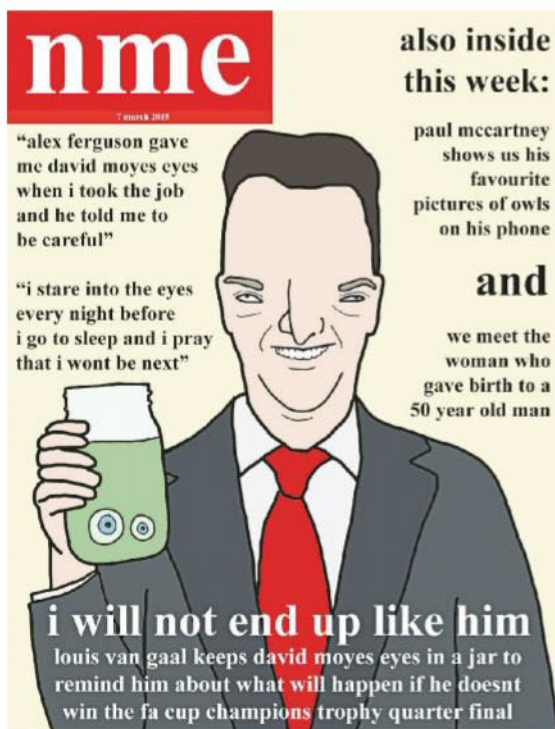
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